REVOLUTION IN INDIA

Path & Problems

MOHIT SEN

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For V

always and after

PREFACE

This book has as its core a greatly revised and updated edition of the **Indian Revolution—Review and Perspective** which was published in 1970 and has long been out of print. The author has accepted a great deal of the criticisms of the book that were made at that time by C. Rajeswara Rao and the late Bhowani Sen, particularly in relation to the problem of the possibilities of peaceful transition in the country. He has also tried to rectify other mistakes pointed out by these two comrades and others. But undoubtedly errors remain.

Mohit Sen

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1 Revolutionary Consciousness

It is altogether appropriate to attempt to write on the Indian revolution these days. Perhaps it should have been done earlier. But it should not be delayed any further, despite the fact that any such attempt would naturally not be free from flaws and tendencies towards subjectivism.

We now live, work and struggle in a situation where the revolutionary process in India is heading for a turn of the spiral, tor a qualitative leap and transformation. Such change will not come of itself. It will be the product of sharp, sustained and bitter struggle. The consciousness needed for this strut's in turn requires a consciousness of this struggle—what are its objectives, linkages and experiences. Revolutions in our times, particularly, represent a dialectical unity of spontaneity and consciousness, both conditioning and reinforcing each other, but with the latter increasingly playing the more decisive role. On looking back, one can perhaps say that this came to the fore with the entry of Lenin on to the stage of world history, to the very centre of the stage, where he has remained and will always remain growing in significance and stature.

This is not at all the same as giving in to voluntarism and raising the "will" or "revolutionary determination" to the position of supremacy. Lenin, above all, never failed to stress the objective reality of situations, especially revolutionary situations, in which revolutionaries had to work and of which they formed a part. Voluntarism is not the elevation of consciousness but its falsification. This is because consciousness has, first of all, to be correct apprehension of objective reality and of its genesis from and connection with it. Voluntarism that tries to evade or escape from reality is therefore not really the exaltation of consciousness but the downfall of consciousness since it separates the latter from objective reality. Those who adhere to voluntarism believe that all that is needed to make a revolution is the existence of a few heroic revolutionaries who are ready to go to any lengths in pursuit of their aim. Whether these heroes have any mass support, whether the forces opposed to the revolution are in a state of crisis, whether the balance of forces is in favour of a revolutionary onslaught—all these are not even questions requiring an answer in the case of the voluntarists.

Some adherents of the voluntarist outlook in India, whether they belonged to the Ranadive leadership in 1948-50 or the socalled Andhra central committee in 1950-51 or the naxalites in 1968-71, objected to any examination of the objective situation before issuing clarion calls for revolutionary mass action. According to them this insistence on a concrete examination of the concrete situation was itself a sign of revisionism. Derisively some of them used to ask whether revolution was equivalent to waiting for the mango to ripen and drop off from the tree by itself. In their view the undoubted poverty, inequality and injustice that was (and is today) rampant in India is ground enough to believe that a revolutionary situation is, as it were, constantly in existence in our country. All that is required is a militant revolutionary offensive push by some determined elements.

What these voluntarists overlooked in their underestimation of the objective situation was the state of consciousness of the masses. What these voluntarists overlooked was also how much work had been done by the revolutionary vanguard to educate the masses, elevate their consciousness, organise them and train them tor revolutionary action. The revolutionisation of the masses requires their learning through their own experience and the clarification of that experience by a revolutionary vanguard party. Thus the voluntarists, in fact, underestimate the role of the subjective factor, of consciousness. In the

name of worship of consciousness they actually 'denigrate the role of consciousness and worship spontaneity.

In this they are not basically different from those whom they consider to be their deadly enemies, i.e. the opportunists, the reformists or the 'economists.' These gentlemen of the 'cautious deed' apparently are those who base themselves firmly on objective reality. For some of them the objective situation never reaches the point where the revolutionary outbreak, the revolutionary onslaught of the masses on the citadels of power, comes on the agenda. Some of them frankly doubt whether such a revolutionary outbreak or onslaught is at all necessary. For these people objective reality achieves the goals of revolution on its own, without the masses in revolutionary motion. For them some 'skilful' and 'judicious' reforms here and there at the 'appropriate time' would be all that is necessary to assist I ho unfolding of objective reality. Some others of this tribe imagine that the masses are revolutionised automatically by their very contact and brush with objective reality or, at best, with some little 'understandable' struggle, i.e. 'understandable' to the 'poor, ignorant masses' who live by bread alone. Economic struggle is the only kind of struggle in their horizon. The giving of supremacy of economic struggle and the regarding of it as the only way to activise the masses and elevate their consciousness which found theoretical expression in 'economism' an ideological trend with which Lenin dealt so trenchantly as far back as 1902 and to which reference will be made later in this section.

Although nowadays in the communist and revolutionary working class movement it would be rare indeed to discover any open advocacy of either the reformist or the economist points of view, there can be no doubt of their continued existence. The dependence on spontaneity has cost the communist movement dearly, not least in India. It is responsible, to a great extent, particularly for the1 lag in building up the Communist Party on strong ideological-theoretical foundations and to treat this work as a priority and specialised job. The great advance made in the last decade by the CPI, based on its programme adopted in 1964 which was the result of the integration of the fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism with concrete conditions of our country and the specific features of the revolutionary process in our country, came precisely when strenuous and consistent efforts were made in this sphere.

The point, however, that requires stressing when one is dealing with right-reformists and opportunists is that their so- called 'reliance' on objective reality is at least as spurious as the 'exaltation' of consciousness by the voluntarists. As a matter of fact, it is precisely their understanding of and approach to objective reality that is faulty and one sided. For objective reality is not static. Changes take place, including qualitative leaps. And to be in touch with objective reality means, therefore, to. be aware of these leaps and to prepare for them.

In addition it should be remembered that historical reality or social development is a specific type of objective reality. It is a kind of 'created reality', since there can be no history and no society without man and man does not exist without consciousness. While in this sphere too one must avoid the idealist mistake of *identifying* the subject and the object, the mechanical materialist mistake of overlooking the dialectical *unity* of the subject and the object must also be avoided.

As long back as in 1845 in his celebrated *Theses on Feuerbach* Marx had stated:

> "The chief defect of all hitherto existing materialism—that of Feuerbach included—is that the thing, reality, sensuousness, is conceived only in the form of the *object* or ot

> *contemplation,* but not as *human sensuous activity, practice,* not subjectively .. . Feuerbach wants sensuous objects, really differentiated from thought objects, but he does not conceive human activity itself as *objective activity...* Hence he 'does not grasp the significance of 'revolutionary' of 'practical-critical' activity...
>
> "The materialist doctrine that men are products of circumstances and upbringing, and that, therefore, changed men are products of their circumstances and changed upbringing, forgets that it is men that change circumstances and that the educator himself needs educating . ..
>
> "The coincidence of the changing circumstances and of human activity can be conceived and rationally understood only as *revolutionising practice" (Selected Works,* Vol. I, Moscow, 1969, pp 13-14, emphasis in original).

In another celebrated passage the founders of scientific communism had pointed out that men make their own history but not as they please since they have to reckon with the circumstances which they have inherited. All too often the emphasis in the understanding of this statement has fallen on the latter halt, i.e. on the circumstances beyond the control of man at any given moment of historical time. But, after all, it should not be forgotten that in that same statement man as the maker of his own history has also been brought to the fore.

It is in the same way that we should appreciate the profound meaning of Lenin's cryptic comment (while making a conspectus of Hegel's *Science of Logic)* "man's consciousness not only reflects the objective world, but creates it" *(Collected Works,* Vol. 38, Moscow, 1961, p 212). This has been sometimes twisted in a way to make out that Lenin was going beyond materialism, that he was abandoning the position that he had so powerfully advanced in *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism,* that he was giving up the basic dividing line in philosophy, i.e. between materialism and idealism. Lenin was, of course, doing nothing of the kind. What he was emphasising in this comment was the active role of consciousness, the possibility of establishing correct connections with objective reality and reaching relative objective truth. Such relative objective truth is undoubtedly the product of human consciousness but at the same time it is not subjective but objective. So too with society and social production and history. These are the creation of humanity and of its consciousness and yet they exist objectively and are not subjective.

Thus the right-reformists and opportunists, in ignoring the active creative role of consciousness are in fact ignoring an important aspect of objective reality, particularly the objective reality ot society and social development. They stand actually upon vulgar materialist or mechanical materialist positions, *reducing* all objective reality to that which is given by nature. They ignore the specifically social and human objective reality of which consciousness is an essential part.

Now the question arises as to whether revolutionary consciousness can be the product of a simple interconnection between human beings, or classes, and the objective reality of society, including those divided into antagonistic classes. Can revolutionary consciousness be the product of what one can call the primary connection between human or class consciousness and the 'created' objective social reality? It is the tremendous historical merit of Lenin that for the first time he faced up to this problem and answered it with all the brilliance of his genius. It is this that makes his *What Is To Be Done?,* published in 1902, one of the greatest works in the entire history of man's endeavor for emancipation, deserving to rank with the *Communist Manifesto.*

> He wrote: "Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement. This idea cannot be insisted too strongly at a time when the fashionable preaching of

> opportunism goes hand in hand with an infatuation for the narrowest forms of practical activity" *(Selected Works,* Vol. I, Moscow, 1967,. p 117)

In this oft-quoted statement we have the formulation of the correct relation between theory and practice, i.e. their constant and inseparable unity. A movement is revolutionary only when it has as its guide revolutionary theory. And, at the same time, theory is revolutionary only when it is connected with a revolutionary movement. Man is not, whatever Mao Tse- tung may state to the contrary, a blank piece of paper of which anything can be written. He is precisely that point of connection between theory and practice. If there can be no theory which is not the product of practice, it is also true that there is no practice which is not guided by theory. And just as there are theories and theories, so also is there practice and practice. Lenin goes on:

> "The history of all countries shows that the working class, exclusively by its own effort, is able to develop only trade- union consciousness, i.e. the conviction that it is necessary to combine in unions, fight the employers and strive to compel the government to pass necessary labour legislation, etc. The theory of socialism, however, grew out of the philosophic, historical and economic theories elaborated by educated representatives of the propertied classes, by intellectuals. By their social status, the founders of modern scientific socialism, Marx and Engels, themselves belonged to the bourgeois intelligentsia. In the very same way, in Russia, the theoretical doctrine of social-democracy arose altogether independently of the spontaneous growth of the working- class movement; it arose as a natural and inevitable outcome of the development of thought among the revolutionary socialist intelligentsia...
>
> "Hence, we had both the spontaneous awakening of the working masses, their awakening of conscious life and conscious struggle, and a revolutionary youth, armed with social-democratic theory and straining towards the workers" (ibid, pp 122-23).

The birth and history of the Communist Party of India offers a remarkable confirmation of these words of Lenin. Only in our case it was the representatives of the revolutionary-patriotic anti-imperialist intelligentsia who were attracted to the October revolution and to the ideas that had guided the party that led the revolutionary forces of Russia. And the endeavour of the first intrepid band of communist pioneers in our country was precisely to elevate the consciousness of the working class and to organise it in militant trade unions as well as an influential and—hopefully—the leading force in the anti-imperialist freedom struggle of our people. This is not the place for any chronicling or even brief analysis of the historical experience of the now over five decades of existence of the CPI. Nevertheless it can and has to be said that time and again both failure and success have revealed for us the vital force of these ideas of Lenin.

Unfortunately in many places unconscious adherence to spontaneity persists and wrong attitude is adopted concerning the politicaisation, more accurately revolutionisation, of the working class in our country. It is sometimes felt that at the best the holding of some 'study classes' and some more 'political meetings' would solve the problem of imparting revolutionary consciousness to the working class since that class is in any case always engaged in struggle from which even a rudimentary kind of trade-union politics does also emerge. The fear of generalisation, of drawing and imparting the lessons, not only of the struggles engaged in directly by the workers but of the entire range of the experience of the given revolutionary movement, dominates many a 'practical' mind.

And yet the working class does not live in a vacuum. It naturally faces problems which are neither always of an economic character, nor directly related to their 'day-to-day struggle in the factory. Issues that stir the nation surely move the working class as well, fundamental ideas of social existence and transformation, of life and of death, of what to base one's family upon, what to tell the children, all crop up among the workers from time to time. And if the revolutionary vanguard fails to tell the workers anything about all these, then h_e turns to tradition or to others. Lenin reported that it was a worker who asked him to see that books were written which would teach him and his colleagues "how to live and how to die".

And it is in the very same *What is to be Done?* that there occurs this remarkable passage:

> 'We should dream!' I wrote those words and became alarmed. I imagined myself sitting at a 'unity conference' and opposite me were the *Rabocheye Dyelo [Workers Cause,* a journal of the 'economists'—MS] editors and contributors. Comrade Martynov rises and, turning to me, says sternly: 'Permit me to ask you, has an autonomous editorial board the right to dream without first soliciting the opinion of the party committees?' He is followed by Comrade Krichevsky, who (philosophically deepening Comrade Martynov, who long ago rendered Comrade Plekhanov more profound) continues even more sternly: I go further. I ask, has a Marxist any right at all to dream, knowing that according to Marx mankind always sets itself the tasks it can solve and that tactics is a process of the growth of party tasks which grow together with the party?' "The very thought of these stern questions sends a cold shiver down my spine and makes me wish for nothing but a place to hide in. I shall try to hide behind the back of Pisarev. " 'There are rifts and rifts', wrote Pisarev of the rift between dreams and reality. 'My dream may run ahead of the natural march of events or may fly off at a tangent in which no natural march of events will ever proceed. In the first case my dream will cause no harm; it may even support and augment the energy of the working men... There is nothing in such dreams that would distort or paralyse labour-power. On the contrary, if man were completely deprived of the ability to dream in this way, if he could not from time to time run ahead and mentally conceive, in an entire and completed picture, the product to which his hands are only just beginning to lend shape, then I cannot at all imagine what stimulus there would be to induce man to undertake and complete extensive and strenuous work in the sphere of art, science and practical endeavor... The rift between dreams and reality causes no harm if only the person dreaming believes seriously in his dream, if h_e attentively observes life, compares his observations with his castles in the air, and it, generally speaking, he works conscientiously tor the achievement of his fantasies. If there is some connection between dreams and life then all is well.'
>
> "Of this kind of dreaming there is unfortunately too little in our movement. And the people most responsible for this are those who boast of their sober views, their 'closeness' to the 'concrete', the representatives of legal criticism and illegal 'tailism'" (ibid, p 267).

If the dream of a new life, of a new culture and civilisation is not taken to the working class and does not grip if, the nightmare of reaction or the illusion of the bourgeoisie will capture it. So too, with politics.

We propose here to provide the reader with some more quotations from this classical work of Marxism-Leninism not in order to intimidate but to illumine.

Lenin writes: "While fully recognising the political struggle (better: the political desires and demands of the workers), which arises spontaneously from the working class movement itself, it *[Rabochaya My si,* another of the organs of the 'economists' -M.S.] absolutely refuses *independently to work out a* specifically *social-democratic politics* corresponding to the general tasks of socialism and to present day conditions in Russia" (ibid, p 133, emphasis in original).

Further:

> "The fact that the economic interests play a decisive role *does not in the least imply* that the economic (i.e. the trade-union) struggle is of prime importance, for the most essential, the 'decisive' interests of classes can be satisfied *only* by radical *political* changes in general. In particular the fundamental economic interests of the proletariat can be satisfied only by a political revolution that will replace the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie by the dictatorship of the proletariat." (ibid, pp 135-36n, emphasis in original)

He goes on to refute the notion that the economic struggle is the best way to draw the workers into political struggle:

> "Is it true that, in general, the economic struggle 'is the most widely applicable means' of drawing the masses into the political struggle? It is entirely untrue. *Any and every* manifestation of police tyranny and autocratic outrage, not only in connection with the economic struggle, is not one with less 'widely applicable' as a means of 'drawing in' the masses...
>
> "Thus, the pompous phrase about 'lending the economic struggle *itself* a political character', which sounds so 'terrifically' profound and revolutionary, serves as a screen to conceal what is in fact the traditional striving to *degrade* social-democratic politics to the level of trade-union politics ...
>
> " 'Economic' concessions (or pseudo- concessions) are, of course, the cheapest and most advantageous from the government's point of view because by these means it hopes to win the confidence of the working masses. For this very reason, we social-'democrats *must not* under any circumstances or in any way whatever create grounds for the belief (or the misunderstanding) that we attach greater value to economic reforms, or that we regard them as particularly important, etc." (ibid, pp 145, 148, 149-50, emphasis in original)

How then should revolutionary socialist consciousness be spread among the workers?

> "Working class consciousness cannot be genuine political consciousness unless the workers are trained to respond to *all* cases of tyranny, oppression, violence and abuse, no matter *what class* is affected—unless they are trained, moreover, to respond from a social-democratic point of view and no other. The consciousness of the working masses cannot be genuine class-consciousness, unless the workers learn, from concrete, and above all from topical, political facts and events to observe *every* other social class in *all* the manifestations of its intellectual, ethical and political life; unless they learn to apply in practice the materialist analysis and the materialist estimate of *all* aspects of life of *all* classes, strata and groups of the population. Those who concentrate the attention, observation and consciousness of the working class exclusively, or even mainly, upon itself alone- are not social-democrats; for the self-knowledge of the working class is indissolubly bound up, not solely with a fully clear theoretical understanding—or rather, not

> so much with the theoretical, as with the practical, understanding—or the relationships between *all* the various classes of modern society, acquired through the experience of political life. For this reason the conception of the economic struggle as the most widely applicable means of drawing the masses into the political movement, which our economists preach, is so extremely harmful and reactionary in its practical significance" (ibid, pp 154-55, emphasis in original).

Lenin goes on to concretise this approach and to criticise the approach of some social-democratic study circles (it should be remembered that, as was the case in other countries as well, at that time in tsarist Russia the revolutionary Marxist workers' organisations and parties called themselves by the name of social-democrats):

> "Class political consciousness can be brought to the workers *only from without,* that is, only from outside the economic struggle, from outside the sphere of relations between workers and employers. The sphere from which alone it is possible to obtain this knowledge is the sphere of relationships of *all* classes and strata to the state and the government, the sphere of interrelations between *all* classes ... To bring political knowledge to the *workers* the social-democrats must go *among all classes of the population;* they must dispatch units of their army *in all directions...*
>
> not be the trade-union secretary, but the *tribune of the people,* who is able to react to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression, no matter where it appears, no matter what stratum or class of the people it affects; who is able to generalise all these manifestations and produce a single picture of police violence and capitalist exploitation; who is able to take advantage of every event, however small, in order to set forth *before all* his socialist convictions and his democratic demands, in order to clarify for *all* and everyone' the world-historic significance of the struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat" (ibid, pp 163-64, emphasis in original).

It is on the basis of this objective fact that class political consciousness has to be inculcated in the working class from outside the realm of its immediate economic class conflict, that Lenin based his concept of the vanguard party. The most fundamental and, in many ways, the most important of the innumerable contributions of the immortal Lenin to the development of the science of revolution was his insistence that the "working class could act as the indispensable hegemon of historical transition from capitalism to socialism only if it was headed by its revolutionary vanguard party based on scientific socialism. Without the class the party would not have a material base and without the party the class would not have its knowledge and spiritual force. To become a class for itself, to act as the leader of the emancipatory process of entire oppressed and exploited humanity the class needed the party. The party represented the necessary condition for the consciousness of the class. The party was—and is—the indispensable means by which class political consciousness is brought to the workers "from outside the economic struggle, from outside the sphere of relations between workers and employers".

The corollary from this point is, of course, that the party can fulfill this role only if it is itself well equipped ideologically and politically, apart from being a disciplined revolutionary organisation. The party has no mystical right given from on high to be the vanguard of the working class. The mere existence of a communist party does not mean that it has automatically acquired this position. It has to struggle to acquire this position. This requires, above all, two basic things - the most extensive possible mass contacts with the working: class and Marxist-

Leninist ideological-political maturity. It is in this context and with this perspective that one has to judge the place and the importance of ideological work inside the party and of the party.

That this is not at all an easy affair has been painfully confirmed by the more than five decades experience of the CPI. What an amount of achievement and agony went into the making, of a situation where systematic ideological work could commence. About this process also Lenin had written magnificently in another of his classical works, *"Leftwing" Communism, an Infantile Disorder:*

> "On the one hand, bolshevism arose in 1903 on the very firm foundation of the theory of Marxism. And the correctness of this, and only this, revolutionary theory has been proved not only by world experience throughout the 19th century, but particularly by the experience of the wanderings and vacillations, the mistakes and disappointments of revolutionary thought in Russia. For nearly half a century—approximately from the forties to the nineties of the last century—advanced thought in Russia, oppressed by an unprecedentedly savage and reactionary tsarism, sought eagerly for a correct revolutionary theory and followed with astonishing diligence and thoroughness each and every 'last word' in this sphere in Europe and America. Russia reached Marxism, the only correct revolutionary theory, through veritable *suffering,* through half a century of unprecedented torment and sacrifice, of unprecedented revolutionary heroism, incredible energy, devoted searching, stud)[r], practical trial, disappointment, verification and comparison with European experience. Thanks to the enforced emigration caused by tsarism, revolutionary Russia in the second half of the 19th century acquired a wealth of international connections and excellent information on world forms and theories of the revolutionary movement such as no other country in the world possessed.
>
> "On the other hand, having been built on this granite theoretical foundation, bolshevism passed through 15 years (1903-17) of practical history which in wealth of experience has no equal anywhere in the world. For no other country during these 15 years had anything even approximating to this revolutionary experience, this rapid and varied succession of different forms of the movement— legal and illegal, peaceful and stormy, underground and open, narrow circles and mass movements, parliamentary and terrorist forms. In no other country has there been concentrated during so short a period such a wealth of forms, shades and methods of struggle of *all* classes of modern society, and moreover, a struggle which, owing to the backwardness of the country and the severity of the tsarist yoke, matured with exceptional rapidity and assimilated most eagerly and successfully the appropriate 'last word' of American and European political experience" (ibid, Vol. 3, pp 378-79).

This striking passage from a work which comes almost at the end of Lenin's great life crowns what he wrote at almost the start of it. It should, however, never be taken to mean that Lenin conceived of the party as an organisation of intellectuals nor that he, in the least, underestimated the importance of the spontaneous movement of the masses. It would be the height of absurdity to imagine that in Lenin's view the workers were to be given merely the role of being at the receiving-end of consciousness and knowledge. It would be even more absurd to imagine that Lenin was thinking in terms of imposing the 'tyranny of the intellectuals' on the working class.

It needs to be remembered that while Lenin pointed out sharply the limitations of the spontaneous movement of the working class he did so because of the danger to which reliance on it alone would expose the workers. As he said:

> "to belittle the socialist ideology *in any way, to turn aside from: it in the slightest degree* means to strengthen bourgeois ideology. There is much talk of spontaneity. But the *spontaneous* development of the working class movement leads to its subordination to bourgeois ideology.
>
> …
>
> The working class spontaneously gravitates towards socialism; nevertheless, most widespread (and continuously and diversely revived) bourgeois ideology spontaneously imposes itself upon the working class to a greater degree" (ibid, Vol. I, pp 157 to 158fh)

It needs to be pointed out that Lenin did never and could never deviate from the bedrock principle of scientific socialism I that it was the working class and no other class that could lead the transition from capitalism to socialism on a world scale. Scientific socialism was not the direct product of the working class nor could the latter's economic struggle on its own engender scientific socialist consciousness. But there was no other class and no other movement that could become the material vehicle of this outlook and rise to its towering heights. There could be no substituting for the working class by any other class, strata or organisation. It was this class and its movement (o which scientific socialism had to be brought. And it was this class, which, in the course of time and effort, would throw up its own intellectuals and eventually produce its own intelligentsia.

As a matter of fact, Lenin wrote about this in *What Is to Be Done?*

> "This does not mean, of course, that the workers have no part in creating such an ideology. They take part, however, not as workers, but as socialist theoreticians, as Proudhon$_s$ and Weitlings; in other words, they take part only when they are able, and to the extent that they are able, to acquir$_e$ the knowledge of their age and develop that knowledge. But in order that working men *may succeed in this more often,* every effort must be made to raise the level of the consciousness of the workers in general; it is necessary that the workers do not confine themselves to the artificially restricted limits of *'literature for workers'* but that they learnt to an increasing degree to master *general literature.* It would be even truer to say 'are not confined', instead of 'do not confine themselves", because the workers themselves wish to read and do read all that is written for the intelligentsia, and only a few (bad) intellectuals 'believe that it is enough 'for workers' to be told a few things about factory conditions and to have repeated to them over and over again what has long been known" (ibid, Vol. I. pp 156-57fn).

It was always the injunction of Lenin that consciousness and the work of spreading class political consciousness should be linked inseparably with the spontaneous movement of the working class. Consciousness cannot ever be spread among a dormant mass. That is why Lenin used so often to remind everybody of the statement of Engels that the class struggle takes three forms— economic, theoretical (ideological) and political. It is necessary to remind ourselves that neither Engels nor Lenin stated that there are three types of class struggle or three class struggles one of which can be picked up for use at. a given time! Certainly, one or other form of the class struggle may come to the forefront at any given moment and certainly the highest form of the class struggle is the political, i.e. the form which leads to the revolutionary seizure of power which is indispensable for the construction of a new society and civilisation.

At the same time, when there are three forms of class struggle it means that if one of the forms is being neglected or not being used at all the class struggle itself is being crippled. And failure to

appropriately develop any one of the forms of the class struggle is sure to adversely affect the conducting of the other forms sooner or later. It should never be thought that neglect, for example, of the theoretical (ideological) form of the class struggle can be postponed till the working class is made ready for it by first waging the economic form of the class struggle. It is true that the mass dimensions of ideological class struggle widely vary but then this is also the case with the other forms. And just as the economic class struggle has to be conducted in ways that are suitable to the given situation and given level of consciousness of the masses concerned, the same applies to the ideological form of the class struggle. It cannot be said that anywhere and at any time the strike form would be the only form of economic class struggle and that if strikes are not being conducted then the economic struggle is not being waged. So with ideological class struggle. It has to be constantly in operation but it can take the form at times of study circles and lectures to groups or that of classes for members of the Marxist-Leninist party or mass meetings called specifically for the purpose of the sale of specially- written papers or pamphlets on ideological themes.

Theory apart, experience has confirmed that life and history take their revenge when any particular form of class struggle is neglected for any significant period. It has been proved in many areas and in many places, for example, in our country that years of hard work on the trade-union front get smashed in a few days when communal or linguistic riots take place in working class areas since neglect of ideological struggle has not immunised the workers against these deadly viruses. In other places it has been found that despite decades of dedicated trade union work we have not been able to withstand the offensive of the capitalist class at crucial moments of choice during the elections, e.g. the Lok Sabha elections in the capital in 1971. This reacts adversely on trade-union work at a later period.

Experience has not been entirely negative either. At the height of the right-reactionary and fascist offensive in Bihar, for example, in 1974, despite justified mass discontent against inflation, unemployment, corruption and the rest, the CPI and the AITUC were able to magnificently rally the working class against these forces and thwart their attempt to utilise this discontent. The same was to be observed at the height of the anti-national and counterrevolutionary mass offensive in Andhra Pradesh in 1972-73. These examples demonstrate that it is not only to economic appeals that the working class responds.

And this is only natural since the working class is after all very much a part of society and all the tremors and shocks that convulse this society, all the impulses and certainty cannot leave this class unaffected. Indeed, above all this class cannot be left unaffected. For it is the class with the greatest connections with the toilers and the oppressed, occupying a pivotal position far more important than its numbers would warrant (though in our country, let it be remembered, that those employed in the organised sector of the economy come to about 19 million, i.e. if the family size of five is taken as the average then some 95 million persons are part of this class), linked with the most advanced production methods and with its face more than turned to the future than any other clas$_s$ or stratum. Without historical initiative and action displayed by this class there is no possibility for a significant move forward by our country and our people.

Hence it is that Lenin wrote so emphatically on the dialectical relation between spontaneity and consciousness:

> "The spontaneity of the masses 'demands a high degree of consciousness from us, social-democrats. The greater the spontaneous upsurge of the masses, the more widespread the movement, the more rapid, incomparably so, the demand for greater consciousness in the theoretical, political and organisational work of the social-democracy" (ibid, Vol. I, p 141).

It is interesting, incidentally, to note that Lenin makes an extraordinarily apt and important comparison between economism and terrorism. He states: "The economists and the present day terrorists have one common root, namely, *subservience to spontaneity* ... The economists and the terrorists merely bow to different poles of spontaneity; the economists bow to the spontaneity of the labour movement pure and simple', while the terrorists bow to the spontaneity of the passionate indignation of intellectuals, who lack the ability or opportunity to connect the revolutionary struggle and the working class movement into an integral whole ...

> "(Jails to terror and calls to lend the economic struggle itself a political character are merely two different forms of *evading* the most pressing duty now resting upon the Russian revolutionaries, namely the organisation of comprehensive political agitation" (ibid, Vol. I, pp 159 and 161).

2 Meaning of Revolution

In India, as elsewhere, the one main charge—and the one with the most appeal—made against the CPI by the ultra-"left" and the CPM is that it has ceased to be revolutionary. The accusation is that the CPI has become reconciled to the status quo, compromised with the establishment and given up the struggle to build a new world. This charge is based on the premise, not always clearly articulated, that the CPI (at least its majority or the non- maoists in it) no longer believes in violent revolution and since there can be no revolution without a clash of arms; it has given up believing in revolution.

Before attempting to answer this charge, it would be better to try to achieve some kind of understanding as to what being a revolutionary means. Here we have to get down to fundamentals. Anybody who claims to be a Marxist will agree that a revolution means, above all, a total change, a complete transformation of the production relations or the property-ownership patterns which form the basis of a given socioeconomic system. These production relations are themselves only a particular way of organising at any given moment man's eternal encounter and conflict with nature—which creates the productive forces of society, including man himself. For a time these production relations aid and develop the growth of the productive forces, facilitate the engagement of man with nature. But this very success produces it$_s$ own nemesis—such is the operation of the dialectical law of social motion. The very growth of productive forces under a given set of production relations begins to rebel against and outgrow those very same production relations which had helped its development in the past. A period of crisis opens for that socioeconomic formation which has reached that stage.

How is this crisis resolved? Here we have the most outstanding characteristic of social development. That crisis is resolved by the action of men, by the conflict between those groups of men whose interests are bound up with the production relations (or ownership patterns) which are historically outmoded and other groups of men whose interests and very lives are crushed by these production relations. Thus the rebellion of the productive forces against outmoded production relations takes the form of class struggle—of conflict between groups of men with opposed interests because of their contrasting position *vis-a-vis* the given system of property relations.

And how, in turn, is this class conflict resolved? Here another element has to be taken into consideration, i.e. what is called the superstructure—social institutions, ideas and, above all, the state with its coercive apparatus. Every pattern of property-ownership reinforces and protects itself through ideas and institutions which are helpful to it and, in the ultimate analysis, by the power of organised coercion, i.e. the state with its prisons, police and army. Production relations cannot be changed unless the forces that protect them are removed from the scene. And apart from ideas and institutions, basic among these elements is the force of state-power. Thus the final resolution of class conflict, itself the manifestation of the rebellion of the productive forces against outmoded production relations, takes place through the capture and radical transformation of state-power. This precisely is revolution.

Just as production relations, however outmoded and retarding, will not automatically give way to superior and more progressive production relations so also no class or coalition of classes which has state-power will gracefully and on its own accord give it up to another class or coalition of classes. State-power has to be conquered, has to be seized. How? By organising and uniting a force superior to that of the entrenched state-power and using that superior force to smash that entrenched state-power and set up a new one. One class rule has thus to be displaced by another class rule. This precisely is revolution.

To help to one's capacity the work of organising and uniting such a force, to fully participate in the most effective manner in the actions of such a force, to join and to lead this force at the most opportune moment in the final assault against the citadel of socially outmoded class power—this precisely is to be a revolutionary. The mettle and worth of a revolutionary will be judged precisely by this exact and accurate criterion, not by the phrases he uses nor by the gestures he makes. Obviously the building up of a revolutionary force cannot be distinguished from, much less contraposed to, the mobilisation of the masses. A revolutionary is one who is able, along with his colleagues joined in a revolutionary organisation, to set the masses in motion, to lead the masses to learn from the experience of their struggles, to raise their level of understanding, their capacity for struggle and the strength of their organisations, to the point where the masses advance to the capture of state-power.

A revolutionary must make a revolution. That is absolutely true. But a revolutionary must know what a revolution is Detore he can make one. And, as a matter of fact, the revolutionary or even group of revolutionaries do not make a revolution. It is the masses who do it, impelled by social crisis and led by revolutionaries, i.e. those with the most knowledge, the clearest perspective, the most courage and the greatest stamina. One cannot be a revolutionary unless one is filled with implacable hatred against the status quo, against the ruling class and the hateful system by which it benefits. Without discontent, without hatred of the ruling class and involvement with the destiny of the oppressed there is no starting on the road to becoming a revolutionary. But that is only to start on the road, that is only the first condition for becoming a revolutionary. One cannot be a revolutionary if one stops there, one cannot be a revolutionary if one builds only on that elemental and primitive sense of anger against injustice. The sincerity of a revolutionary is inseparable from stamina, from study and work to most effectively rouse and organise the masses and bring them to revolutionary positions. This requires much more than romanticism and anger. This requires courage and capacity for sustained and at times even heartbreaking work.

This brings us to the first charge: the CPI (or its majority) is not revolutionary since it does not believe in violent revolution. Let us clear up a misconception here, at least as far as the CPI is concerned.

The CPI has not converted itself into a party that is opposed to violence from the angle of adherence to nonviolence and on grounds of absolute principle. The CPI is fully aware of the hourly and daily violence being perpetrated against the common people by the exploiters and their state. The CPI is fully aware, further, that the reactionary forces of India are no different from their brethren elsewhere, will never depart from the historical scene voluntarily. They will not hesitate to use all means, including the most violent one, in order to retain their power and privilege. They have already shown their fangs in our country, even while swearing by Gandhian principles.

All these points are only a confirmation of the fundamental tenets of Marxism and their full validity for our country. The CPI, however, goes a step further to ask: is it inevitable that the *form* of revolution in India will have to be the same as in Russia, China or Cuba? Is it inevitable that in India, too, the revolution will have to take the *form* of civil war as in those countries? To these questions the answer of the CPI is that civil war is not the inevitable form of revolution in India. There is a *possibility* that in India the form of the revolution will be that of peaceful transition. The CPI, however, is quite clear that peaceful transition is *not the only possible* form of the Indian revolution. If the CPI does not believe that civil war is inevitable, it also does not believe that peaceful transition is inevitable. The latter is a possibility and the CPI will do its best

to make this possibility a reality. It will not ignore this possibility. At the same time, the CPI will certainly not oblige the ruling class by overlooking the other possibility- that of civil war. It will constantly keep that possibility in mind in its work. It will never drop its revolutionary vigilance. At the same time it is essential to be clear about what peaceful transition is as a possible form of the Indian revolution. Peaceful transition is not the obsession with elections, is not parliamentarism or the parliamentary path. Peaceful transition means the combination of parliamentary and extra-parliamentary struggle, with the major role played by the latter. It is the mass movement, mass struggle and mass organisation, headed by the revolutionary vanguard, that plays the decisive role. Without this factor peaceful transition is not possible and cannot even be dreamed of. And let it he added, that without this factor civil war also cannot be dreamed of. The mass movement and mass struggle and mass organisation and revolutionary vanguard—these are essential for both forms of revolution whether peaceful or violent.

About forms of revolutionary struggle it would be as well to take counsel with Lenin than whom no greater revolutionary has ever been born. As early as September 1906, he wrote:

> "Let us begin from the beginning. What are the fundamental demands which every Marxist should make of an examination of the question of forms of struggle? In the first place, Marxism differs from all primitive forms of socialism by the fact that it does not bind the movement to any one particular form of struggle. It admits the most varied forms of struggle; and it does not 'concoct' them, but only generalises, organises, gives conscious expression to those forms of struggle of the revolutionary classes which arise of themselves in the course of the movement. Absolutely hostile to all abstract formulas and to all doctrinaire recipes, Marxism 'demands an attentive attitude *to* the *mass* struggle in progress which, as the movement develops, as the class-consciousness of the masses grows, as economic and political crises become acute, continually gives rise to new and more varied methods of 'defence and offence. Marxism, therefore, positively does not reject any form of struggle. Under no circumstances does Marxism confine itself to the forms of struggle that are possible and that exist at the given moment only, recognising as it does that new forms of struggle, unknown to the participants of the given period, *inevitably* arise as the given social situation changes. In this respect Marxism *learns,* if we may so express it, from mass practice, and makes no claim whatever to *teach* the masses forms of struggle invented by 'systematisers' in the seclusion of their studies. We know— said Kautsky, for instance, when examining the forms of social revolution—that the coming crisis will introduce new forms of struggle that we are now unable to foresee.
>
> "In the second place, Marxism demands an absolutely *historical* examination of the question of forms of struggle. To treat the question apart from the concrete historical situation is to betray ignorance of the very rudiments of dialectical materialism. At different stages of economic evolution, depending on differences in political, national-cultural, living and other conditions, different forms of struggle come to the fore and become the principal forms of struggle; and in connection with this, the secondary, auxiliary forms of struggle undergo change in their turn. To attempt to answer yes or no to the question whether any particular means of struggle should be used, without making a detailed examination of the concrete situation of the given movement at the, given state of its development, means completely to abandon the Marxist position.
>
> "These are the two principal theoretical precepts by which we must be guided. The history of Marxism in Western Europe provides an infinite number of examples corroborating what has been said. European social- democracy at the present time

> regards parliamentarism and the trade-union movement as the principal forms of struggle; it recognised insurrection in the past, is quite prepared to recognise it, should conditions change, in the future—despite the opinion of bourgeois liberals like the Russian Cadels and the *Bezza-glavsti.* Social-democracy in the seventies rejected the general strike as a social panacea, as a means of overthrowing the bourgeoisie at one stroke by nonpolitical means—but social-democracy fully recognises the mass political strike (especially after the experience of Russia in 1905) as *one* of the methods of struggle essential under *certain* conditions. Social-democracy recognised street barricade fighting in the forties, rejected it for definite reasons at the end of the nineteenth century, and expressed complete readiness to revise the latter view and admit the expediency of barricade fighting after the experience of Moscow, which, in the words of K. Kautsky, initiated new tactics of barricade fighting" (Marx-Engels-Marxism, sixth English edition, Moscow, pp 194-96, emphasis in original).

This longish quotation from Lenin should prove of immense help to young revolutionaries in our country who have been led away by their youthful enthusiasm to identify revolution and revolutionary struggle with only one type of struggle— armed struggle. They have been led to believe that unless one engages in armed struggle here and now or at least works for inevitable armed struggle in the near future one is not a revolutionary. This is precisely to make a fetish of one form of struggle and to refuse to both learn from the masses in this regard and to study the concrete situation before deciding what form of struggle is most appropriate at the present moment. Proceeding on this premise we have to come to the conclusion that Lenin himself was no revolutionary.

This above analysis may be agreed upon, but a further question may be asked. What about the final struggle? Will that not be armed struggle since 'all power flows from the barrel of gun'? One has to tackle this question. It is completely un-Marxist to maintain that all power resides in the gun, that only the gun gives power.

The correct position is to put it this way. Power issues from the people. It is the people who, in the final analysis, provide the power to the state, to the ruling class and also its guns. 'Similarly the power of the revolutionary forces is based on the people, on their attachment to the cause of the revolution. "Without such mass attachment to the revolutionary cause the power of the revolutionary guns would be weak and ineffective.

This basic and most fundamental point must never be overlooked in any discussion about the question of power. Forgetting this point leads to a kind of cult of the gun, a cult of violence, both of which are profoundly alien to the ideology and cause of revolution.

Nor is this a matter of theory or belief. Life itself, historical experience, confirms this point. How else could revolutions have been made at all against the reactionary ruling classes who had far more guns at their command than the revolutionaries? But as the revolutionary crisis 'developed it became increasingly difficult for them to use these guns against the people. Those who were in the armed forces of reaction began increasingly to switch their loyalties, began even to hand over the guns to the people. It is this change in the consciousness of the people that gives power to the guns of the revolutionaries just as it was the lack of this consciousness or the low level of political consciousness of the peopl$_e$ that enabled the reactionary ruling class to maintain its power with the help of guns.

Take, for instance, the examples of the Russian, Chinese and Cuban revolutions. In all these revolutions the starting point was revolutionary consciousness and power growing step by step

despite relatively much less firepower than that possessed by the reactionaries. Indeed, even at the time of the revolutionary seizure of power the advantage in sheer quantity of weapons was on the side of the ruling class but still it could not cope with the revolutionary forces. First and foremost, it' is revolution, the revolutionary masses who give power to the guns or acquire power greater than any number of guns. It is the revolution that gives power to the gun.

This, of course, does not mean that a revolution is simply a matter of winning a majority of people, bringing them on the streets and then the armed protectors of the ruling class will simply surrender and abdicate power. Not at all. In the first place, there is a reciprocal action between winning the majority of the people and the attitude of the armed forces.

The picture of the revolution and of power is a complex and composite one. It is neither simply one of guns nor one of people without guns. It is one of the guns joining the people or refusing to fire at the people or many guns being overwhelmed by relatively less guns but backed by very many more people and by much greater élan. But this complexity and compositeness is far removed from eclecticism or confusion. It is true that both guns and the people are important but it is the people who are decisive and not the guns.

It may be asked as to whether or not there are any fundamental features of the revolutionary process which are applicable to all countries? There are such features and the world communist movement has given plenty of thought to this problem. Here again it is useful to turn to Lenin. This is what he wrote:

> "We now possess quite considerable international experience which shows very definitely that certain fundamental features of our revolution have a significance that is not local or peculiarly national or Russian alone, but international... It would, of course, be grossly erroneous to exaggerate this truth and to extend it beyond certain fundamental features of our revolution. It would also be erroneous to lose sight of the fact that, soon after the victory of the proletarian revolution in at least one of the advanced countries, a sharp change will probably come out: Russia will cease to be the model and will once again become a backward country (in the 'soviet' and the socialist sense)... At the present moment in history, however, it is the Russian model that reveals to *all* countries something—and something highly significant—of their near and inevitable future." *(Selected Works,* Vol. III, 1975, pp 291-92)

He added:

> "As long as national and state distinctions exist among peoples and countries—and these will continue to exist for a very long time to come, even after the dictatorship of the proletariat has been established on a worldwide scale— the unity of the international tactics of the communist working-class movement in all countries demands, not the elimination of variety or the suppression of national distinctions (which is a pipe-dream at present), but the application of the *fundamental* principles of communism (soviet power and the dictatorship of the proletariat), which will *correctly modify* these principles in certain *particulars,* correctly adapt and apply them to national and national-state distinctions. To seek out, investigate... the *concrete manner* in which each country should tackle a *single* international task: victory over opportunism 'and left- doctrinarism within the working- class movement; the overthrow of the bourgeoisie; the establishment of a Soviet republic and a proletarian dictatorship—such is the basic task in the historical period that all advanced countries (and not they alone) are going through" (ibid, p 349, emphasis in original)

He went on to state:

> "History as a whole, and the history of revolutions in particular, is always richer in content, more varied, more multiform, more lively and ingenious than is imagined by even the best parties, the most class-conscious vanguards of the most advanced classes. This can be readily understood, because even the finest of vanguards express the class consciousness, will, passion and imagination of tens of thousands, whereas at moments of great upsurge and the exertion of all human capacities, revolutions are made by the class consciousness, will, passion and imagination of tens of millions spurred on by a most acute struggle of classes. Two very important practical conclusions follow from this: first, that in order to accomplish it$_s$ task the revolutionary class must be able to master *all* forms or aspects of social activity without exception (completing after the capture of political power— sometimes at great risk and with very great danger—what it did not complete before the capture of power); second, that the revolutionary class must be prepared for the most rapid and brusque replacement of one form by another.
>
> "... Unless we learn to apply all methods of struggle, we may suffer grave and sometimes even decisive defeat, if changes beyond our control in the position of the other classes bring to the forefront a form of activity in which we are especially weak... Inexperienced revolutionaries often think that legal methods of struggle are opportunist because, in this field, the bourgeoisie has most frequently deceived and duped the workers (particularly in 'peaceful' and non- revolutionary times), while illegal methods of struggle are revolutionary. That, however, is wrong...
>
> "The principal reason for their [leaders of the Second International—MS] bankruptcy was that they were hypnotised by a definite form of growth of the working class movement and socialism, forgot all about the one-sidedness of that form, were afraid to see the break-up which objective conditions made inevitable, and continued to repeat simple and, at first glance, incontestable axioms that had been learned by rote...
>
> "We must see to it that communists do not make a similar mistake, only in the opposite sense, or rather, we must see to it that a *similar mistake,* only made in the opposite sense by the "left-communists, is corrected as soon as possible and eliminated as rapidly and painlessly as possible. It is not only right-doctrinarism that is erroneous; left-doctrinarism is erroneous too" (ibid, pp 352-53 and 357-58, emphasis in original).

These long quotations would certainly help those ultra-left' revolutionaries in our country to realise that making a fetish of a particular form of struggle is contrary to very explicit prescriptions by that greatest of revolutionaries, Lenin. They would certainly help them to realise that while there are fundamental laws of revolution, the *form* of revolution, the form of struggle depends on a whole host of contingent factors.

This conclusion of Lenin was reiterated by the 1957 meeting, of the communist and workers' parties which was attended by Mao himself. The declaration adopted at that meeting noted that "the processes of the socialist revolution and the building of socialism are governed by a number of basic laws applicable in all countries embarking on a socialist course. These laws manifest themselves everywhere, alongside a great variety of historic national peculiarities and traditions which must by all means be taken into account.

> "These laws are: guidance of the working masses by the working class, the core of which is the Marxist-Leninist party, in effecting a proletarian revolution in one form or another and. establishing one form or other of the dictatorship of the proletariat; the alliance of the working clas$_s$ and the bulk of the peasantry and other sections of the

> working people; the abolition of capitalist ownership and the establishment of public ownership of basic means of production; gradual socialist reconstruction of agriculture; planned development of the national' economy aimed at building socialism and communism, at raising the living standard of the people; the carrying out of the socialist revolution in the sphere of ideology and culture and the creation of a numerous intelligentsia devoted to the working class, the working people and the cause of socialism; the abolition of national oppression and the establishment of equality and fraternal friendship between the peoples; defence of the achievements of socialism against attacks by external and internal enemies; solidarity of the working class of the country in question with the working class of other countries, i.e. proletarian internationalism."

There are a few other points regarding the revolutionary process to which one would like to draw the attention of the reader and which seem to be of special relevance to us today.

The first of these relates to the struggle against counterrevolution. It was none other than Marx himself who had stated that revolution itself organises the counterrevolution. What this means is that as the revolutionary forces regain together significant momentum, most reactionary sections of the ruling class, sensing the danger, try to steal a march on the revolutionary forces and increasingly take recourse to methods of struggle against these forces which are outside the 'normal' mechanism of rule. This has become ominously familiar since the emergence of fascism in the twenties and thirties. And more recently we have seen this particular type of counterrevolutionary attack manifested with tremendous brutality in Chile in 1973 and Bangladesh in 1975. Nor has our country been an exception. Ever since 1967 and more especially after 1969 fascist and right-reactionary forces have made repeated attempts to seize power and establish a counterrevolutionary neocolonialist regime in our country.

A most conspicuous feature of these events, whether in our country or elsewhere, has been that US imperialism and its monstrous engine of subversion—the CIA—has been the chief force, the leader and the organiser of these counterrevolutionary conspiracies. The notorious doctrine of 'destabilisation' advanced by Nixon and Kissinger and endorsed by Ford has made it clear that the US imperialists will stop at nothing to topple states and governments which refuse to bow to their will, be these governments revolutionary-democratic or bourgeois-democratic. They are not prepared to tolerate the slightest degree of independence on the part of states and governments when they feel that there is a good chance of being able to topple them. Caught up in the vortex of the qualitative deepening of the third stage of the general crisis of capitalism, compelled to come to terms with the Soviet Union and the socialist community on the basis of peaceful coexistence and detente, routed in Vietnam, the US imperialists are trying to compensate for all this, recoup and find a way out by capturing new positions in the newly-independent countries, particularly India. Hence their link-up with domestic reaction in a bid to prevent India and other countries from advancing on the road of independent national development and social progress and to turn it back on to the path of neocolonialist dependent capitalism.

In this endeavour, the US imperialists are also acting in concert with another dangerous and counterrevolutionary force. And that is maoist China. Having betrayed the cause of communism and abandoned the fundamental principles of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism, the militarist- bonapartist maoist regime of China is acting to try to disrupt the world communist movement and the socialist community on the basis of the most vicious anti- sovietism. On the very same basis, it is doing all that it can to disrupt the growing friendship and alliance between the newly-independent states and the national-liberation movements and the Soviet Union

and the socialist community. It too acts on the theory that "there is a great disorder under heaven and this is very good". There is nothing to distinguish the maoist doctrine of 'disorder' from the Kissinger doctrine of 'destabilisation'. And thus it is no accident that we find them cooperating and colluding in Chile, Bangladesh, Angola and also in India.

Now the point to be borne in mind is that these forces of counterrevolution are trying to overthrow a non- revolutionary, bourgeois-democratic government in India, i.e. the government of Indira Gandhi. This is a government that represents the capitalist class but in which the centrists basically based on the non monopoly bourgeoisie occupy the leading positions. This is a government pursuing an anti-imperialist global policy in close and friendly connection with the Soviet Union and the socialist community, as well as progressive newly-independent states. It is a government that tries to build up an independent capitalist country, compromises with monopoly capitalism and landlordism, gives concessions in the economic sphere to the multinationals and other imperialist forces but also brings about important and progressive changes in certain key sectors of our socioeconomic system. And this government operates in a situation characterised by the fiasco of the capitalist path of development pursued since India won freedom. It operates in a situation of deep, intensifying mass discontent moving in the direction of a virtual revolt against the capitalist path of development and for a radical democratic transformation of our socioeconomic system.

The pressure of the offensive of counterrevolution and the pressure of the mass democratic movement for radical structural changes naturally expedite the process of 'differentiation in the ruling class but in a zigzag manner and with any number of twists and turns.

In such a situation what has to be the correct strategy of the revolutionary forces? This situation is precisely the one which we are living through but in its fundamentals is not so different from what the entire world communist movement had to face at the time of the taking shape of the fascist danger and against which it worked out a new tactical line at the seventh world congress of the Communist International in 1935.

What are the main points of this tactical line? *First,* that fascism represents the most deadly menace and danger to all democratic forces, including the working class and the communist parties. The victory of fascism would not be just the change of one capitalist government by another, but the victory of the most reactionary section of the monopoly capitalist class, the victory of counterrevolution which would mean a tremendous setback for all the democratic forces. Fascism or counterrevolution represented the first and main enemy of revolution.

Second, fascism or counterrevolution could not be defeated except by building the unity of all antifascist forces. It was the supreme and indispensable duty of the working class and its vanguard party to take up this duty of building this antifascist unity and maintaining it through struggle.

Third, the struggle against fascism and counterrevolution is not the struggle to defend the status quo. It is simultaneously and precisely the struggle to achieve and win antifascist democratic power, antifascist democratic radical socioeconomic transformations. It is a struggle against the social forces whose expression fascism is and against the socioeconomic base of these forces. The struggle against fascism prepares the political army and creates the needed unity to go forward to achieve this radical democratic advance.

Fourth, the very needs of the antifascist struggle and unity dictate that the communist parties at the head of an ever more united working class should be consolidated strengthened and their

mass base extended. The independent role of the communist parties is not diminished but enhanced. This, in turn, requires that an implacable ideological struggle is waged against all manifestation of "left'-sectarianism as well as any right-opportunist and reformist trends.

As a matter of fact, this approach and line of the seventh congress of the Communist International—which remains basically valid today—was based on the classical work of Lenin viz. *"Leftwing" Communism, An Infantile Disorder.* He pointed out:

> "The more powerful enemy can be vanquished only by exerting the utmost effort, and by the most thorough, careful, attentive, skilful and *obligatory* use of every, even the smallest 'rift' among the enemies, every antagonism of interests among the bourgeoisie of various countries and among the various groups or types of bourgeoisie, within the various countries, and also by taking advantage of every, even the smallest opportunity of gaining a mass ally, even though this ally be temporary, vacillating, unstable, unreliable and conditional. Those who fail to understand this, fail to understand even a particle of Marxism, or of scientific, modern socialism *in general.* Those who have not proved by *deeds* over a fairly considerable period of time, and in fairly varied political situations, their ability to apply this truth in practice have not yet learned to assist the revolutionary class in its struggle to .emancipate all toiling humanity from the exploiters. And this applies equally to the period *before* and *after* the proletariat has conquered political power" (ibid, p. 332, emphasis in original).

What needs to be stressed is that the working class cannot achieve its emancipation on its own. Finding allies is basic to its very law of motion, to its historic revolutionary mission. The working class cannot be itself, cannot become a class for itself, without bringing into being a system of alliances. The united front is, therefore, not a transient phenomenon or a matter of expediency. It is a permanently operating factor and indispensable for the working class and its revolutionary vanguard. Of course the system of alliances varies with the particular stage of the revolutionary process and the possibilities of bringing it into being with the particular balance of forces at a given moment.

The Leninist policy of united front has to be sharply demarcated from the eclectic and opportunist policy of uniting with anybody and everybody. The tactical line of united front is inseparably connected with the class analysis of the stage of the revolutionary process and, therefore, with a clear class understanding of who the enemies are and who the allies of the working class. It depends on an accurate scientific assessment of how these class forces are represented, by what political formations, parties and even groups within parties. Without this scientific basis, the tactical line of the united front cannot even begin to be applied or it will be "applied" in any opportunist or revisionist fashion.

We have seen this happening in our country as far as the CPM is concerned. Starting with a sectarian programmatic strategy in which the anti-imperialist democratic potential of the national bourgeoisie was underestimated, going on to make a wrong analysis of the class character of the Indian state and ruling party by estimating both as essentially and completely counterrevolutionary and right reactionary, it has landed itself in the unenviable position of colluding with counterrevolutionary and fascist forces. And with the natural resistance of its members, cadres and mass base to this course, the CPM has ended up in a state of paralysis and crisis which now threatens its very existence.

The other point that one would like to discuss is the Leninist concept of the development of the revolutionary process.

The *material* basis of the revolutionary process is the sum total of the conflict between a given level of development of the productive forces of a particular socioeconomic formation and the relations of production of that same formation. This fundamental law has been given classical expression by Marx in his celebrated preface to "A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy":

> "At a certain stage of their development, the material productive forces of society come in conflict with the existing relations of production or—what is but a legal expression tor the same thing—with the property relations within which they have been at work hitherto. From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an epoch of social revolution" (Marx-Engels, *Selected Works,* Vol. I, 1973, pp 503-4)

At this point it is necessary to emphasise that the Marxist-Leninist definition and understanding of the forces of production of society include as its most crucial element man with a certain historically inherited and historically evolving production experience, standard of life, ideological outlook and aspirations. When we mention that the forces of production are in rebellion against the relations of production, it is not as if only the implements of labour that are involved. Man, working man, is at the heart and centre of the process.

It is this fact that gets translated into the next step of our understanding of the revolutionary process, i.e. its manifestation in the form of class struggle. Class struggle is neither to be taken as an abstraction nor as a subjective phenomenon, which need or need not come into being. Class struggle is the mode of existence, the law of motion of antagonistic classes. It is, as Marx told us in his well-known letter to Weydemeyer, "only bound up with *particular historical phases in the development of production,* (2) that the class struggle necessarily leads to *the dictatorship of the proletariat,* (3) that this dictatorship only constitutes the transition to the *abolition of classes* and to a *classless society"* (ibid, p 528, emphasis in original).

There is no escape from or evasion of class struggle in a society with antagonistic classes. At the same time, class struggle is *always specific,* being bound up with particular historical phases in the development of production. It is utterly wrong to conceive of the struggle between the working class and the bourgeoisie in India in separation from the particular historical phase of production in which this class struggle takes place and of which it is indeed an expression. The fact that in India the leading relation of production is the capitalist one does not necessarily mean that the class struggle of the working class *directly* with the bourgeoisie is the *leading* element, much less the exclusive element, of the totality of clas$_s$ struggle in our country. That this particular class struggle exists cannot be doubted for a single moment. But it is linked up with and mediated by the existence of other class struggles that are simultaneously taking place on the basis of the existence of other relations of production. Naturally this class struggle has its own reciprocal influence upon the other class struggles. These class struggles together make up the law of motion of Indian society as it is made up today. To understand this totality, to see the interconnections, to pick upon the *key link* in the *chain of class struggles,* to understand the interrelationship between the totality of class struggle within the country and that taking place on a world scale—this is precisely the task of the Marxist-Leninist party in our country, as it is in any other country. It is by this that it will either advance or be pushed back. This is because this is the objective reality in which it operates and whose transformation it has to help to bring about on the basis of its own objective law of motion. The development of this totality of class struggle or of the revolutionary process goes through various *phases.* This is different from the question of the *stages* of the revolutionary process, i.e. the question of the qualitative difference as well as link between the democratic and the socialist stages of the revolutionary process. It is also different from the question of the *types* of revolution, i.e. socialist, antimonopoly-democratic, national-

democratic, people's democratic, etc. Finally, it is different from the question of the *forms* of the revolutionary climax. What we would like to discuss here is the *maturing* of the revolutionary process, abstracting for the time being from these other questions.

Through the development of class struggle, understood in its proper and broad sense as outlined above, the advance of the revolutionary process reaches the phase which is termed the *revolutionary situation.*

As Lenin put it, ("The Collapse of the Second International"):

> "To the Marxist, it is indisputable that a revolution is impossible without a revolutionary situation; furthermore, it is not every revolutionary situation that leads to revolution. What, generally speaking, are the symptoms of a revolutionary situation? We shall certainly not be mistaken if we indicate the following three major symptoms: (1) When it is impossible for the ruling class to maintain their rule without any change; when there is a crisis, in one form or another, among the 'upper classes', a crisis in the policy of the ruling class, leading to a fissure through which the discontent and indignation of the oppressed classes burst forth. For a revolution to take place, it is usually insufficient for the 'lower classes not to want' to live in the old way; it is also necessary that the 'upper classes should be unable' to live in the old way; (2) when the suffering and want of the oppressed classes hav$_e$ grown more acute than usual; (3) when, as a consequence of the above causes, there is a considerable increase in the activity of the masses, who uncomplainingly allow themselves to be robbed in peace time, in turbulent times, are drawn both by the circumstances of the crisis and by the *'upper classes' themselves* into independent historical action.
>
> "Without these objective changes, which are independent of the will, not only of individual groups and parties, but even of individual classes, a revolution as a general rule is impossible. The totality of all these objective changes is called a revolutionary situation." (Marx-Engels- Lenin, On *Historical Materialism,* Vol. 72, p 464, emphasis in original)

In a later period, Lenin returned to the theme in his *"Left-Wing" Communism* and wrote:

> "The fundamental law of a revolution, which has been confirmed by all revolutions and especially by all three Russian revolutions in the twentieth century, is as follows: for a revolution to take place, it is not enough for the exploited and oppressed masses to realise the impossibility of living in the old way, and demand changes; for a revolution to take place, it is essential that the exploiters should be unable to live and rule in the old way. It is only when the *'lower classes' do not want* to live in the old way and the 'upper classes' *cannot carry on in the old way* that the revolution can triumph. This truth can be expressed in other words: revolution is impossible without a nationwide crisis (affecting both the exploited and the exploiters). It follows that for a revolution to take place, it is essential, first, that a majority of the workers (or at least a majority of the class-conscious, thinking and politically conscious active workers) should fully realise that revolution is necessary and that they should be prepared to die for it; second, that the ruling classes should be going through a governmental crisis, which draws even the most backward masses into politics (symptomatic of any genuine revolution is a rapid, tenfold and even hundredfold increase in the size of the working and oppressed masses— hitherto apathetic—who are capable of waging the political struggle), weakens the government, and makes it possible for the revolutionaries to rapidly overthrow it" (ibid, p 656, emphasis in original).

The *revolutionary situation* is the *objective* basis on which a *revolutionary outbreak* can take place. It is the necessary but ... not sufficient condition for a revolution. For this supremely crucial factor is the subjective one. It is to this factor that the following passages from Lenin emphatically draw our attention. It is true that these passages (as well as the one from Engels's *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Germany)* deal with insurrection as the form of revolutionary outbreak but fundamentally these would apply to any other form of the revolutionary outbreak. Discussion of this theme would be taken up immediately following the quotations.

Lenin stated:

> "It is not every revolutionary situation that gives rise to a revolution; revolution arises only out of a situation in which the abovementioned objective changes are accompanied by a subjective change, namely, the ability of the revolutionary *class* to take revolutionary mass action *strong* enough to break (or dislocate) the old government, which never, not even in a period of crisis, 'falls' if it is not toppled over" (ibid, pp 464-65, emphasis in original).

In another passage he states:

> "To be successful, insurrection must rely not upon conspiracy and not upon a party, but upon the advanced class. That is the first point. Insurrection must rely upon a *revolutionary upsurge of the people.* That is the second point. Insurrection must rely upon that *turning point* in the history of the growing revolution when the activity of the advanced ranks of the people is at its height, and when the *vacillations* in the ranks of the enemy and *in the ranks of the weak, half-hearted and irresolute friends of the revolution* are strongest. That is the third point. And these three conditions for raising the question of insurrection distinguish *Marxism from Blanquism.*
>
> "Once these conditions exist, however, to refuse to treat insurrection as an *'art* is betrayal of Marxism and a betrayal of the revolution" (ibid, p 579, emphasis in original).

This reference to insurrection as an art takes us back to Engels who as long back as 1851-52 generalised the experience of the revolution of 1848 and wrote:

> "Now insurrection is an art quite as much as war or any other, and subject to certain rules of proceeding which, when neglected, will produce the ruin of the party neglecting them... Firstly, never play with insurrection unless you are fully prepared to face the consequences of your play. Insurrection is a calculus with very indefinite magnitudes, the values of which may change every day; the forces opposed to you have all the advantage of organisation, discipline and habitual authority; unless you bring strong odds against them you are defeated and ruined. Secondly, the insurrectionary career once entered upon, act with the greatest determination, and on the offensive. The defensive is the death of every armed rising; it is lost before it measures itself with its enemies. Surprise your antagonists while their forces are scattering, prepare new successes, however small but daily; keep up the moral ascendant which the first successful rising has given to you; rally thus those vacillating elements to your side which always follow the strongest impulse, and which always look out for the safer side; force your enemies to a retreat before they can collect their strength against you; in the words of Danton, the greatest master of revolutionary policy yet known: *de faudace, de l'audace, encore de taudacel."* (ibid, pp 118-19, emphasis in original)

It may be asked whether all this applies to peaceful transition. Fundamentally it does since peaceful transition is, after all, a form of *revolution.* It would be the height of reformist stupidity to imagine that peaceful transition to state-power can take place without the existence of a revolutionary situation, Or that it can be successfully maintained without the revolutionary mass upsurge, etc., which Lenin referred to in dealing with the question of insurrection.

It is possible that peaceful transition in one or another country may take the shape of the coming to *governmental power* of a united front which may not even have won a majority in the elections. This 'did happen in Chile in 1971. But this did not mean that the revolution had triumphed. It did, however, mean that a revolutionary situation had come into being. The Popular Unity Front had to take action to destroy the socio-economic base of counterrevolution, both external and internal. It had to take action to considerably extend its mass support and win the overwhelming majority of the people, including the middle strata. It had to take action to purge the state apparatus of counterrevolutionary elements, including in the armed forces. It had to take action to bring into being popular committees at various levels which would not only unite all the forces of the revolution but be equipped to act decisively from below along with loyal governmental forces from above at the time of critical confrontation. In order to go forward to the completion of the revolutionary process, the forces and the government of Popular Unity had to be able to crush counterrevolution with all the decisiveness and firmness required. For a variety of reasons this did not happen and since the last quarter of 1973 Chile has had to live in the dark night of counterrevolution triumphant.

The experience of Chile does not invalidate the Marxist-Leninist thesis of the possibility of peaceful transition as a form of revolution. But it also confirms that being a form of revolution peaceful transition too has to obey its objective fundamental laws.

It should not be thought that the issue of revolutionary success is always settled in one and the same manner. This is true whether the form of revolution is basically that of armed struggle or of peaceful transition. Both these forms are not found in a pure form and the kinds of struggle in the revolutionary process of any particular country are usually quite varied. In addition to this mingling of types of struggle there is the additional fact that the forms of armed revolution have been quite varied—the Soviet revolution of 1917 was certainly not the same as that of China or of Cuba or of Vietnam. And in all these revolutions, apart from armed struggle, considerable use was made of other forms of struggle. In all of them the issue was decided, above all, by the appropriate mobilisation and unification of the vast masses and by the building of one or another kind of united front of different classes, parties and political forces. There is no reason to doubt that peaceful transition as a form of revolution would also display a similar variety of types. Peaceful transition in India, for example, can scarcely be expected to be the same as that of France or of Italy—should it in fact materialise in any or all of these countries.

But whatever the form, there can be no avoiding of the fact that the victory of revolution would require success in a series of desperate battles against counterrevolution both before and after the capture of power. Any ideological disarmament of the revolutionary parties, classes and masses can lead to grave consequences and to defeat.

Another very important point about the characteristics or fundamentals of the maturing of the revolutionary process in any country is its link with the world revolutionary process as a whole. The multiple- streamed world revolutionary process should not be seen as a quantitative adding up of the revolutionary process in the different countries. The world revolutionary process is the product of the fact that capitalism, particularly in its highest stage of imperialism, had established itself as a worldwide system and, therefore, also the

struggle against it and to replace it had to take place on a worldwide scale. At the same time the development of capitalism as a worldwide system was a contradictory phenomenon—its internationalisation was accompanied by the strengthening of national markets and states; by the subjugation of weaker states by more powerful states and the exploitation of the latter by the former; by the law of uneven 'development. This naturally meant that the worldwide revolutionary process would manifest itself in specific national forms. The revolutionaries of any given country had, therefore, not only to keep in mind the worldwide character of the revolutionary process but also the specifics of its expression in that country. They had to bear in mind, therefore, their duties and obligations to the world revolutionary movement as well as remember the help received from it and the impact of it upon their own struggle. At the same time they had to remember that the chief contribution they could make to the further advance of the world revolutionary process was to build up the revolutionary movement in their own countries. This is as true today as it has been in the past. The only difference is that in our times the connection between the world revolutionary process as a whole and that in any particular country has become much closer. In the new epoch in which the world socialist system with the Soviet Union as its centre, chief and vanguard force, is exercising ever more decisive influence upon world social development, no revolutionary-struggle in any country has any chance of success if it keeps aloof from and pits itself against the Soviet Union and the world socialist system. The reverse is also true. The closer the alliance between the revolutionary forces of any country and the worldwide revolutionary streams, particularly the Soviet Union and the world socialist community, the greater the chance of its success. Proletarian internationalism is not only as imperative a necessity as ever before, but a stimulus to revolutionary advance and victory in all countries.

3 Lenin and Revolution in Russia

It would be instructive at this stage to examine briefly the manner in which Lenin assessed and acted and led the revolution in Russia.

In 1905 the revolutionary storm burst in tsarist Russia and as always Lenin participated in it not only as an energetic organiser and agitator but as a theoretician. He displayed again the uncanny knack of being able to swiftly generalise the seething and fresh experience of the millions so that this generalisation could become a guide to further revolutionizing practice.

The finest product of such theoretical endeavour was *Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution.* This book, again, will stand in the same category as the celebrated *Eighteenth Brumaire* and *Civil War in France* of Marx. In this book Lenin sets out and answers the cardinal problems that confront the working class and its vanguard party in the period of the democratic revolution. He sets out and solves the problems of how to further the direct class aims of the proletariat in the pre- socialist stage of the revolution, how to combine the proletariat's class tasks with the general tasks of the accomplishment of the democratic revolution. In its general features, these problems continue to confront large segments of the world communist movement whether in the advanced capitalist states (the antimonopoly front) or in the newly- independent states (the national-democratic front).

Lenin begins with a typical 'activist' or 'interventionist' statement:

> "Undoubtedly, the revolution will teach us, and will teach the masses of the people. But the question that now confronts a militant political party is: shall we be able to teach the revolution anything?" *(Selected Works,* Vol. I, 1975, p 426)

But in order to "teach" the revolution anything it was essential to be clear about its basic character:

> "The degree of Russia's economic development (an objective condition), and the degree of class- consciousness and organisation of the broad masses of the proletariat (a subjective condition inseparably bound up with the objective condition) make the immediate and complete emancipation of the working class impossible... We are all convinced that the emancipation of the working classes must be won by the working classes themselves; a socialist revolution is out of the question unless the masses become class-conscious and organised, trained and educated in an open class struggle against the entire bourgeoisie. .. Whoever wants to reach socialism by any other path than that of political democracy will inevitably arrive at conclusions that are absurd and reactionary both in the economic and political sense. If any workers ask us at the appropriate moment why we should not go ahead and carry out our maximum programme we shall answer by pointing out how far from socialism the masses of the democratically-minded people still are, how undeveloped class antagonisms still are, and how unorganised the proletarians still are" (ibid, pp 435-36).

This, in a sense, was nothing new. The Marxists of Russia, as well as the leadership of the Second International, had come to the conclusion quite some time before the publication of *Two Tactics* that in Russia the first stage of the revolution would not be socialist but bourgeois-democratic. The tremendous new contribution that Lenin made was to define a new type of bourgeois-democratic revolution in the specific conditions of tsarist Russia where the liberal bourgeoisie had inherent weaknesses and where it confronted not only tsarist autocracy, or even not so much tsarist autocracy, but also the working class. It was, therefore, a situation where

the tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution had to be completed at a far higher level of antagonism between the working class and the bourgeoisie than at any previous, higher than the 1848 revolution in Germany which had been analysed by Marx and Engels and which was the only historical precedent available at the time. This gave rise to any amount of ideological confusion in the ranks of the Social-Democratic Labour Party in Russia as well as in the Second International. The menshevikas, the inheritors of the sorry tradition of the economists, came out with the stereotyped dogmatic formulations that since the revolution was bourgeois- democratic in character, it had necessarily to be led by the liberal bourgeoisie with the working class playing a subsidiary role and doing nothing to scare away the bourgeoisie. Only after the victory of the bourgeoisie would the working class really come into its historic role.

It was against this dogmatic approach, which ignored the realities of Russia of the times and which belittled the political role of the working class, that Lenin turned the fullness of his polemical prowess. He states:

> "The outcome of the revolution depends on whether the working class will play the part of a subsidiary to the bourgeoisie, a subsidiary that is powerful in the force of its onslaught against the autocracy, but impotent politically, or whether it will play the part of leader of the people's revolution" (ibid, pp 426-27). He goes on:
>
> "Marxists are absolutely convinced of the bourgeois character of the Russian revolution. What does that mean? It means that the democratic reforms in the political system, and the social and economic reforms that have become a necessity for Russia, do not in themselves imply the undermining of bourgeois rule; on the contrary, they will, for the first time, really clear the ground for a wide and rapid, European not Asiatic, development of capitalism; they will, for the first time, make it possible for the bourgeoisie to rule as a class...
>
> "But it does not by any means follow that a *democratic* revolution (bourgeois in its social and economic essence) would not be of *enormous* interest to the proletariat. It does not follow that the democratic revolution could not take place in a form advantageous mainly to the big capitalist, the financial magnate, and the 'enlightened' landlord, and in a form advantageous to the peasant and the worker...
>
> "Marxism teaches the proletariat not to keep aloof from the bourgeois revolution, not to be indifferent to it, not to allow the leadership of the revolution to be assumed by the bourgeoisie but, on the contrary, to take a most energetic part *in* it, to fight most resolutely for consistent proletarian democratism, for the revolution to be carried to its conclusion. We cannot get out of the bourgeois-democratic boundaries of the Russian revolution, but we can vastly extend these boundaries, and within these boundaries we can must fight for the interests of the proletariat, for its immediate needs and for conditions that will make it possible to prepare its forces for the future complete victory... He would be a fine Marxist indeed who in a period of democratic revolution failed to see this difference between the degrees of democratism and the difference, between its forms, and confined himself to 'clever' remarks to the effect that, after all, this is 'a bourgeois revolution'" (ibid, pp 450-51 & 454).

Here we have Lenin creatively developing the Marxist theory of the distinction as well as link between the democratic and socialist revolutions. The point is further elaborated:

> "We all contrapose bourgeois revolution and socialist revolution; we all insist on the absolute necessity of strictly distinguishing between them; however, can it be denied that in the course of history individual, *particular* elements of the two revolutions become interwoven? Has the period of democratic revolutions in Europe not been familiar with a number of socialist movements and attempts to establish socialism? And will not the future socialist revolution in Europe still have to complete a great deal left undone in the field of democratism?" (ibid, pp 481-82)

This concept of the "extension of the boundaries" of the bourgeois-democratic revolution and "interweaving" within it of elements of the socialist revolution was a revolutionary departure from the previous formulations of the Marxists, though made with the help of the Marxist method and on the basis of the fundamentals of the Marxist theory. While it has to be sharply demarcated from the notorious trotskyite "intertwining" of the two stages of the revolution or even the denial of the feasibility of the bourgeois-democratic stage itself, it dealt a mortal blow to the menshevik pedantry about a bourgeois-democratic revolution being bourgeois and only bourgeois. As with any really creative development of revolutionary theory, it not only helped the vanguard party to anticipate the course of events. It did this, of course. But even more significant, it helped to release the energies of the working class, enabled it to stretch itself to the limits of its historical potential.

What were to be the concrete manifestations of this "extension of the boundaries" of the bourgeois-democratic revolution? First and foremost, as has been mentioned above, the endeavour of the working class would be to head this revolution; and not act as an auxiliary of the liberal bourgeoisie. We have here the celebrated Leninist concept of the hegemony of the proletariat in the period of the bourgeois-democratic revolution.

The second element is clarity with regard to the allies of the working class in the period of the bourgeois-democratic revolution. The question of hegemony cannot be separated from the question of allies. After all, to lead one must have those who will follow. It is in this connection that Lenin makes another remarkable development of Marxist theory which is as illuminating for us today as his concept of hegemony. This is the concept of two trends in bourgeois-democracy itself, one of which is the trend of petty-bourgeois revolutionary-democracy. It is a great pity that while correctly highlighting Lenin's opposition to menshevik infatuation with the liberal bourgeoisie, "not enough stress has been placed on his insistence that there is another trend which is also bourgeois-democratic but simultaneously revolutionary. It may be mentioned her$_e$ that Lenin further developed this concept in his famous report to the second congress of the Communist International. In our times the international communist movement has gone still further in this Leninist direction in its analysis of the situation and prospects in many newly-independent countries. Hitting out at the mensheviks, Lenin states:

> "Our reply to our opponents is- a social-democratic party which operates in a bourgeois society cannot take part in politics without marching, in certain cases, *side by side* with bourgeois 'democracy. The difference between us in this respect is that we march side by side* with the revolutionary and republican bourgeoisie, without merging with it, whereas you march side by side with the *liberal and monarchist bourgeoisie,* without merging with it either...
>
> "The tactical slogans we have formulated in the name of the third congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party coincide with the slogans of the democratic-revolutionary and republican bourgeoisie. In Russia this bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie have not yet formed themselves into a big people's party. But only one who is utterly ignorant of what is now

> taking place in Russia can doubt that elements of such a party exist. We intend to guide (if the great Russian revolution makes progress) not only the proletariat, organised by the Social-Democratic Party, but also this petty bourgeoisie which is capable of marching side by side with us...
>
> "Such elements lot' revolutionary-democracy—MS] are mostly to be found among the peasants. In classifying the big social groups according to their political tendencies we can, without danger of serious error, identify revolutionary and republican democracy with the mass of the peasants—of course, in the same sense and with the same reservations and implied conditions that we can identify the working class with social-democracy" (ibid, pp 449-50.

Further,

> "The bourgeoisie, in the mass, will inevitably turn towards counterrevolution, towards the autocracy, against the revolution and against the people, as soon as its narrow, selfish interests are met, as soon as it 'recoils' from consistent democracy *(and it is already recoiling from it).* There remains the 'people', that is, the proletariat and the peasantry: the proletariat alone can be relied on to march on to the end, tor it goes far beyond the democratic revolution. . . The peasantry includes a great number of semi- proletarian as well as petty-bourgeois elements. This makes it also unstable, compelling the proletariat to rally in a strictly class party. However, the instability of the peasantry differs radically from that of the bourgeoisie, for at present the peasantry is interested not so much in the absolute preservation of private property as in the confiscation of the landed estates, one of the principal forms of private property. Without thereby becoming socialist, or ceasing to be petty bourgeois, the peasantry is capable of becoming a wholehearted and most radical adherent of the democratic revolution...
>
> "The Russian revolution will begin to assume it's real sweep, and will really assume the widest revolutionary sweep possible in the epoch of bourgeois-democratic revolution, only when the bourgeoisie recoils from it and when the masses of the peasantry come out as active revolutionaries side by side with the proletariat. To be consistently carried through to the end, our democratic revolution must rely on forces capable of paralysing the inevitable inconsistency of the bourgeoisie. . .
>
> *"The proletariat must carry the democratic revolution to completion, allying to itself the mass of the peasantry in order to crush the autocracy's resistance by force and to paralyse the bourgeoisie's instability. The proletariat must 'accomplish the socialist revolution, allying to itself the mass of the semi-proletarian elements of the population, so as to crush the bourgeoisie's resistance by force 'and paralyse the instability of the peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie."* (ibid, pp 492 & 493-94), emphasis in original)

It is interesting to recall here that Lenin does not anywhere mention that the "main blow" in the stage of the democratic revolution has to be delivered against the inconsistency of the bourgeoisie. From his entire analysis it would follow that the "main blow" has to be delivered against tsarist autocracy, while paralysing the instability of the bourgeoisie. This theory of the "main blow" developed by Stalin in his *Foundations of Leninism* did great harm to the world communist movement, leading to sectarianism in the sphere of united-front work.

It is even more interesting to note the possibility outlined by Lenin of the peasantry and petty bourgeoisie developing their own political parties and emerging on the scene as active revolutionaries with their own role to play. Lenin does not formulate in *Two Tactics* that the only two active social

forces in the camp of the bourgeois-democratic revolution are the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. He certainly insists on the leadership of the proletariat but conceives this leadership in the form of an *alliance* and not of "reserves" (Stalin) nor of total incapacity of the peasantry and petty bourgeoisie to play any creative independent role whatsoever (Trotsky). Lenin conceived of the development of the forces of the peasant revolution moving together with and under the leadership of the proletariat, organised in the battle array of insurrection, as the way to the decisive victory of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Russia.

It is this understanding that led Lenin to formulate the most favourable outcome of the Russian bourgeois-democratic revolution as "the establishment of the *revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat und the peasantry"* (ibid, p 457). The peasantry, as the main social base of the forces of "revolutionary-democracy", was to be part of the dictatorship and not just hanging about somewhere on the periphery of power. It is a profound pity that Lenin's visualisation of the role of the peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie was not always kept in mind by all sections of the international communist movement. It would have helped to avoid a great deal of the sectarianism that harmed the communist movement, not least in the colonial and semi-colonial countries in which the 'democratic revolution would, of course, have the basic difference that it would be directed against imperialism and national oppression.

When the February 1917 revolution broke out Lenin was in exile in Switzerland, returning to Russia only some six weeks later in the famous 'sealed train'. Although he was in constant contact with the revolutionary underground and although he, above all, had pointed to the possibility and need of turning the imperialist war into civil war, the outbreak of the revolution caught him by surprise. In his famous lecture on "Lecture on the 1905 Revolution" to the Swiss working youth in January 1917 we find him saying:

> "... the coming years, precisely because of this predatory war, will lead to popular uprisings under the leadership of the proletariat against the power of finance capital, against the big banks, against the capitalists; and these upheavals cannot end otherwise than with the expropriation of the bourgeoisie, with the victory of socialism.
>
> "We of the older generation may not live to see the decisive battles of this coming revolution" (ibid, 1963, p 842).

In less than a year after this lecture, Lenin himself announced the victory of the first socialist revolution in the world. Here was the "cunning" of reality, as Lenin so often expressed it, outstripping the mind of genius. But equally, as we shall see, the mind of genius, of a revolutionary genius, catches up with this unexpected twist of history and, by acting upon it, "straightens" it into a leap of the historical spiral. Between February and October 1917 (adhering to the dates of the old Russian calendar) we shall see this tense encounter between the mind of Lenin and the turns of objective reality, and their fusion in the form of the October explosion. A study of this encounter will help to clarify how revolutions are "made", or at least how the greatest of revolutionaries led the making of the yet unsurpassed revolution.

Such a study becomes possible only because of Lenin's extraordinary capacity to write out his conclusions even as they are actually becoming a part of the historical process. He wrote in November 1917, just about a month after the seizure of power, as a postscript to *State and Revolution,* itself a major theoretical work completed in the underground, that "it is more pleasant and useful to go through the 'experience of revolution' than to write about it" (ibid, Vol. 2, 1968, p 361). But he wrote about the revolution even as he was going through it; this makes the revolution itself articulate, self-conscious and, therefore, instructive.

The very first thing that Lenin attempted was to understand the February revolution. This became necessary for three reasons. Firstly, it had to be understood as to what forces were involved in the surprisingly quick overthrow of the Romanov monarchy. Secondly, the nature of the power system thrown up by the revolution had to be understood, especially the relation between the provisional government and the Soviets of workers' and soldiers' deputies. Thirdly, thought had to be given to the likely road of advance from the February revolution.

Now, what had happened in the February revolution? The tsar had been overthrown, democratic liberties had been established and a combination of revolutionary powers had emerged; but where was the democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants?

In his celebrated "Letters from Afar" (March 1917) Lenin analysed the quick collapse of the tsarist monarchy as due to: the churning up accomplished by the 1905 revolution; the "mighty accelerator" called the imperialist war; a joint blow from the "whole of bourgeois and landlord Russia" and from the Soviets of workers' deputies; the situation in tsarist Russia of "disorganisation most appalling and the proletariat most revolutionary"; and the *"downright organisation of a plot* against Nicholas Romanov" by Anglo-French imperialism.

The quick success of the February revolution "is only due to the fact that, as a result of an extremely unique historical situation, *absolutely dissimilar currents, absolutely heterogeneous* class interests, *absolutely contrary* political and social strivings have *merged"* (ibid, p 5). And the result is the emergence of a new government representative "of the new class that has arisen to political power in Russia, the class of capitalist landlords and the bourgeoisie which has long been ruling our country economically" (ibid, p 6). But, simultaneously, alongside- this government, "has arisen the chief, unofficial, as yet undeveloped and comparatively weak *workers' government,* which expresses the interest of the proletariat and of the entire poor section of the urban and rural population" (ibid, p 7)

Lenin amplifies this analysis in the article entitled "The Dual Power" (April 1917):

> "The basic question of every revolution is that of state power... The highly remarkable feature of our revolution is that it has brought about a *dual power...* We must know how to supplement and amend old 'formulas', for example, those of bolshevism, for whil$_e$ they have been found to be correct on the whole, their concrete realisation *has turned out to be* different. *Nobody* previously thought, or could have thought, of a dual power" (ibid, p 18).
>
> He linked the emergence of the dual power and of the surrender of positions to the bourgeoisie entrenched in the provisional government to the *"insufficient class-consciousness* and organisation of the proletarians and peasants" (ibid, p 19).

Thus the bourgeois-democratic revolution, envisaged earlier, had taken on a dramatically new form. Nor was it completed, despite the overthrow of the tsar and the realisation of democratic liberties on an unprecedented scale. Its incompleteness, above all, lay in the fact that the democratic agrarian revolution had not been accomplished. Lenin's vision that in Russia to complete the bourgeois-democratic revolution the triumph of the bourgeoisie was not the cardinal factor, that for this a democratic 'dictatorship of the workers and peasants was required, was confirmed. But at the same time, revolutionary reality had proved to be more "cunning"—it had set up a dual power!

Where was this dual power going to go? Who would win— the capitalist power of the provisional government or the worker-peasant power of 'the Soviets? And if the worker-peasant power was to win, would it win on the basis of the bourgeois-democratic revolution or would it win *by* going

forward to the socialist revolution, by converting itself from an embryo of the democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants into the dictatorship of the proletariat, based on the alliance of the workers and poorest peasantry led by the former? Was a second revolution on the agenda? And if it was, how was it to be accomplished?

Lenin's analysis was, as usual, both intricate and concrete and issuing forth in a slogan of action.

In his "The Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution" (April 1917) he writes:

> "State-power in Russia has passed into the hands of a new *class,* namely, the bourgeoisie and the landlords who had become bourgeois. *To this extent* the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Russia is completed" (ibid, p 23.)

But this state-power is allying with the feudalists and, above all, not "laying a finger on the landed estates, the material foundation of feudal tsarist. It is not convening the constituent assembly, not reforming the state machinery, not taking democratic action against the monopolies, and is bent on continuing the imperialist war. This government has to be overthrown.

But before this can be accomplished the peculiar nature of the dual power ("the main feature of our revolution") has to be understood:

> "The class origin and the class significance of this dual power is the following: the Russian revolution of March 1917 not only swept away the whole tsarist monarchy, *not* only transferred the entire power to the bourgeoisie, but also *moved closer towards a* revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry...
>
> "The second highly important feature of the Russian revolution is the fact that the Petrograd Soviet of soldiers' and workers' deputies, which, as everything goes to show, enjoys the confidence of the most of the local Soviets, is *voluntarily* transferring state-power to the bourgeoisie and its provisional government, is voluntarily *ceding* supremacy to the latter...
>
> "Two powers *cannot exist* in a state. One of them is bound to pass away; and the entire Russian bourgeoisie is already trying its hardest everywhere and in every way to keep out and weaken the Soviets, to reduce them to naught, and lo establish the undivided power of the bourgeoisie.
>
> "The dual power merely expresses a *transitional* phase in the revolution's development, when it has gone further than the ordinary bourgeois-democratic revolution, *but has not yet reached* a 'pure' dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry'' (ibid, p 26).

This dual power as well as the willing subordination of the Soviets to the provisional government are explained thus:

> "Russia at present is seething. Millions and tens of millions of people, who had been politically 'dormant for tens of years and politically crushed by the terrible oppression of tsarism and by inhuman toil for the landowners and capitalists, *have awakened and taken eagerly* to politics. And who are these millions and tens of millions? For the most part small proprietors, petty bourgeois, peopl$_e$ standing midway between the capitalists and the wage'-workers. Russia is the most petty bourgeois of all European countries.

> "A gigantic petty-bourgeois wav$_e$ had swept over everything and overwhelmed the class-conscious proletariat, not only by force of numbers but also ideologically; i.e. it has infected and imbued very wide circles of workers with the petty-bourgeois political outlook" (ibid, p 27).

And since "the petty bourgeoisie are in real life dependent upon the bourgeoisie", this petty-bourgeois wave has led to the policy of surrender of the Soviets (then 'dominated by the petty-bourgeois parties) to the bourgeois provisional government. Hence the task is to rescue the proletariat and the poorest peasantry, i.e. the non petty- bourgeois sections from the ideological and political influence of the petty-bourgeois parties who controlled the Soviets. Lenin says:

> "Our work must be one of criticism, of *explaining* the mistakes of the petty-bourgeois socialist-revolutionary and social-democratic parties, of preparing and welding the elements of a *consciously* proletarian, Communist Party, and of *curing* the proletariat of the 'general' petty-bourgeois intoxication.
>
> "This *seems* to be 'nothing more' than propaganda work, but in reality it is most *practical revolutionary* work; for there is no advancing a revolution that has come to a standstill, that has choked itself with phrases, and that keeps 'marking time', *not because* of external obstacles, *not because of the violence* of the bourgeoisie (Guchkov is still only threatening to employ violence against the soldier mass), but *because* of the unreasoning trust of the people.
>
> "Only by overcoming this unreasoning trust (and we can and should overcome it only ideologically, by comradely persuasion, by pointing to the *lessons of experience}* can we set ourselves tree from the prevailing *orgy of revolutionary phrase mongering* and really stimulate the consciousness both of the proletariat and the mass in general, as well as their bold and determined initiative *in the localities*—the independent realisation, development and consolidation of liberties, democracy, and the principle of people's ownership of all the land" (ibid, p 28).

From now on the strategy of the revolution is quite clear in the mind of Lenin. Even in order to complete the bourgeois-democratic revolution the state-power of the capitalist class has to be destroyed. And in order to accomplish this, the masses, already organised in the embryonic state form of the Soviets, have to be freed from the influence of the petty-bourgeois moods and parties. But if this is done then the transition will be made not from capitalist class rule to the democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants, but to the dictatorship of the proletariat. Thus the compulsions of the completion of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in the specific situation, following the victory of the February 1917 revolution, led on to the socialist revolution. Not only Lad the Russian bourgeoisie displayed its incapacity to complete the 'democratic revolution but the Russian petty bourgeoisie had also demonstrated its incapacity to shake itself loose from that bourgeoisie. A richly paradoxical situation leading to a highly paradoxical solution- on to the socialist revolution but with the programme of the democratic revolution.

Those who depict Lenin as some kind of dogmatist who somehow managed to bring about a socialist revolution because of fortunate circumstances, and others who depict him as working out the strategy of the Russian revolution years in advance, both do Russian revolutionary reality as well as Lenin a grave injustice. They mix up the general contours of historic development, including revolutionary leaps, with the actual specific contours of a revolutionary happening. Sketching the general contours is certainly important, but far more important—and a far rarer capacity—is,

so to speak, to catch the revolution on the wing, to understand its specific dynamic at the point of explosion. Only those who are able to do both can lead revolutions.

Lenin had worked out the general scheme of the Russian revolution and its separate but interdependent stages—the democratic and socialist—and he had forged the instrument of the revolution, the Bolshevik Party, on the basis of this scheme. Additionally, almost h_e alone had pointed out as-long ago as 1914 that the then imperialist war should and could be converted into a civil war. The revolutionary outbreak in Russia dramatically justified him, but in a significantly surprising manner. To surmount that surprise proved beyond the strength of all the other leaders of the bolsheviks.

Lenin alone was able to swerve his theory to the seemingly escaping perplexity of reality and then transform it into the explicability of the socialist revolutionary solution. Perhaps an even more signal achievement was his capacity to make the bolsheviks accept his conclusions almost as soon as they were articulated. This again was not only due to his tremendous personality or to the years of invaluable leadership. It was, above all, due to an unfailing capacity to explicate reality almost before it had ensued.

Lenin, however, did not exhaust himself in simply explaining the revolutionary process and its strategic course. He proved himself to be a most superb tactician of the revolutionary struggle. Here again the popular myth that he identified the socialist revolutionary outbreak with the form of the insurrection is very far from the truth.

In his speech at the seventh (April) conference of the Bolshevik Party he states:

> "In this transitional period, as long as the armed force is in the hands of the soldiers, as long as Milyukov and Guchkov [the most prominent figures in the bourgeois provisional government -MS] have not yet resorted to violence, this civil war, so far as we are concerned, turns into peaceful, prolonged, and patient class propaganda. To speak of civil war before people have come to realise the need for it is undoubtedly to lapse into blanquism. We are for civil war but only for civil war waged by a politically conscious class. There are no oppressors in Russia at present; it is the soldiers and not the capitalists who now have guns and rifles; the capitalists are-getting what they want now not by force but by deception, and to shout about violence now is senseless...
>
> "...what we need in the present situation is caution, caution, caution. To base proletarian tactics on subjective desires means to condemn it to failure" (ibid, pp 69-70)

In another speech at the end of June, Lenin says:

> "You have gone through 1905 and 1917. You know that revolution is not made to order, that revolutions in other countries were made by the hard and bloody method of insurrection, and in Russia there is no group, no class, that would resist the power of the Soviets. In Russia, this revolution can, by way of an exception, be a peaceful one." (ibid, p 145)

Nor was this a statement made in passing. Lenin repeats this analysis precisely when the peaceful development of the revolution was no longer possible, i.e. following the political crisis of 3 and 4 July. On 3 July, a demonstration against the provisional government began spontaneously in the Vyborg district of Petrograd (now Leningrad). The demonstration in which both soldiers and workers took part threatened to grow into an armed revolt. The bolsheviks believing that an armed revolt at that time was premature (i.e. barely four months prior to the October revolution) tried to hold back the masses. On failing to do so they joined the demonstration in

order to attempt to give it a peaceful and organised character. Both the provisional government and the central executive committee of the Soviets, then controlled by the petty-bourgeois parties (the socialist-revolutionaries and the mensheviks), connived at the calling in of the troops and the bloody suppression of the demonstration. Later, even though the bolsheviks had decided to conclude the demonstration, troops moved in to smash the bolshevik press, to attempt to arrest Lenin and other bolshevik leaders. The bolshevik papers were banned. Mass arrests, searches and raids began. Revolutionary units of the Petrograd garrison were withdrawn from the city and sent to the fronts. This represented an important turning point in the revolutionary process. It was only then that, as Lenin stated, the bayonet was placed on the agenda.

In an article entitled "The Political Situation" (10 July) he writes:

> "The counterrevolution has become organised and consolidated, and has actually taken state-power into its hands...
>
> "At present basic state-power in Russia is virtually a military dictatorship...
>
> "The slogan 'All Power to the Soviet!' was a slogan for peaceful development of the revolution which was possible in April, May, June and up to 5-9 July, i.e. up to the time when actual power passed into the hands of the military dictatorship. This slogan is no longer correct; for it does not take into account that power has changed hands and that the revolution has in fact been completely betrayed by the SRs and mensheviks. Reckless actions, revolts, partial resistance, or hopeless hit-and-run attempts to oppose reaction will not help. What will help is a clear understanding of the situation, endurance and determination of the workers' vanguard, *preparation* of forces for the armed uprising, for the victory of which conditions at present are extremely difficult, but still possible if the facts and trends mentioned above coincide" (ibid, pp 167-68).

In the middle of July in an article entitled "On Slogans", Lenin points out that the period of the dual power lasted from February to 4 July, during which:

> "What *really mattered* was that arms were in the hands of the people, and there was no coercion of the people from without. That was what opened up and ensured a peaceful path for the progress of the revolution. The slogan 'All Power Must Be Transferred to the Soviets' was a slogan for the next step, the immediately feasible step, on that peaceful path of development. It was a slogan for the peaceful development of the revolution, which was possible and, of course, most desirable between 27 February and 4 July but which is now absolutely impossible.
>
> "Apparently not all the supporters of the slogan 'All Power Must Be Transferred to the Soviets' have given adequate thought to the fact that it was a slogan for peaceful progress of the revolution—peaceful not only in the sense that nobody, ho class, no force of any importance, would then (between 27 February and 4 July) have been able to resist and prevent the transfer of power to the Soviets. That is not all. Peaceful development would then have been possible, even in the sense that the struggle of classes and parties *within* the Soviets could have assumed a most peaceful and painless form, provided full state-power had passed to the Soviets in good time...
>
> "The substance of the situation is that these new holders of state-power can be defeated only by the revolutionary masses, who, to be brought into motion, must not only be led by the proletariat, but most also turn their backs on the socialist-

> revolutionary and menshevik parties, which have betrayed the cause of the revolution...
>
> "It is indisputable that for them [the proletariat—MS] to take action and offer resistance at the moment would be aiding the counterrevolutionaries. It is also indisputable that a decisive struggle will be possible only in the event of a new revolutionary upsurge in the very depths of the masses." (ibid, pp 174, 177, 179)

Thus contrary to certain theoreticians who swear by Lenin, there is nothing sacrosanct about armed struggle and insurrection as a form of revolution—the revolution and a particular form of it are not to be identified. It is also quite clear that, at least as far as Lenin was concerned, even when armed uprising became the only possible form of revolution it was neither feasible nor wise to commence on this course in the absence of a revolutionary upsurge of the masses. It was not armed uprising that would lead to the revolutionary upsurge but the revolutionary upsurge that would lead to the insurrection; such was Lenin's conclusion on the very eve of the October revolution.

Another sharp turn of the revolutionary process which placed insurrection on the agenda was the fate of the Kornilov revolt. This was the attempt at an armed suppression of the Soviets, Bolshevik Party, mass organisations by the army headquarters headed by general Kornilov. This attempt was connived at by the then head of the civilian government, Kerensky. At the same time contradictions developed between Kerensky and Kornilov on the question of who was to be at the helm following the planned counterrevolutionary massacre. The Kornilov coup was defeated not by the Kerensky government but by the independent mobilisation of the bolsheviks, by the spontaneous demonstrated will of a large number of military units not to follow the commands of Kornilov and his military headquarters.

We find Lenin writing to the central committee of the Bolshevik Party (30 August):

> "The Kornilov revolt is a most unexpected (unexpected at such a moment and in such a form) and 'downright unbelievably sharp turn in events.
>
> "Like every sharp turn, it calls for a revision and change of tactics. And as with every revision, we must be extra-cautious not to become unprincipled...
>
> *"Even now,* we must not support Kerensky's government...
>
> "We shall fight, we are fighting against Kornilov, *just as* Kerensky's *troops do,* but we do not support Kerensky. *On the contrary,* we expose his weakness. There is the difference. It is rather a subtle difference, but it is highly essential and must not be forgotten.
>
> "What, then, constitutes our change of tactics after the Kornilov revolt?
>
> "We are changing the *form* of our struggle against Kerensky. Without in the least relaxing our hostility towards him, without taking back a single word said against him, without renouncing the task of overthrowing him, we say that we must *take into account* the present situation. We shall not overthrow Kerensky right now. We shall approach the task of fighting him *in a different way,* namely, we shall point out to the people (who are fighting against Kornilov) Kerensky's *weakness* and *vacillation.* That has been done in the past as *well.* Now, however, it has become the *all-important* thing and this constitutes the change.
>
> "The change, further, is that the *all-important* thing now has become the intensification of our campaign for some kind of "partial demands' to be presented to

> Kerensky... We must present these demands not only to Kerensky, and *not so much* to Kerensky, as to the workers, soldiers and peasants who have been *carried away* by the course of the struggle against Kornilov...
>
> "It would be wrong to think that we have moved further away from the task of the proletariat winning power. No. We have come very close to it, *not directly,* but from the side. *At the moment* we must campaign not so much directly against Kerensky, as *indirectly* against him, namely, by demanding a more and more active, truly revolutionary war against Kornilov. The development of this war alone can lead *us* to power." (ibid, pp 196-99)

In September Lenin comes to the conclusion that the time for the insurrection has been reached and that the main task of the bolsheviks is now to take all the necessary organisational measures to ensure the success of the insurrection. From the early days of September we find, as it were, Lenin in a new mood. Earlier he had been urging caution, warning against a premature uprising and insisting upon the work of propaganda and agitation. Now he urges, scolds, remonstrates and demands that an armed uprising be thoroughly prepared and ruthlessly undertaken. Following Marx, Lenin had come to the conclusion that the time had arrived to pass from using the weapons of criticism to taking recourse to the criticism of weapons.

He now writes insistently to the central committee of the bolsheviks (12-14 September):

> "The bolsheviks, having obtained a majority in the Soviets or workers' and soldiers' deputies of both capitals, can and must take state-power into their own hands.
>
> "They can because the active majority of revolutionary elements in the two chief cities is large enough to carry the people with it, to overcome the opponent's resistance, to smash him, and to gain and retain power. . .
>
> "The majority of the people are *on our side.* This was proved by the long and painful course of events from 6 May to 31 August and to 12 September. The majority gained in the Soviets of the metropolitan cities *resulted* from the people coming over *to our side.* The wavering of the socialist-revolutionaries and mensheviks and the increase in the number of internationalists within their ranks prove the same thing...
>
> "We are concerned now not with the 'day' or 'moment' of insurrection in the narrow sense of the word. That will be only decided by the common voice of those who are *in contact* with the workers and soldiers, with *the masses...*
>
> "The point is to make the *task* clear to the party. The present task must be an *armed uprising* in Petrograd and Moscow (with its region), the seizing of power and the overthrow of the government." (ibid, pp 362-63)
>
> Immediately after he writes again to his central committee:
>
> "To be successful, insurrection must rely not upon conspiracy and not upon a party, but upon the advanced class. That is the first point. Insurrection must rely upon a *revolutionary upsurge of the people.* That is the second point. Insurrection must rely upon that *turning point* in the history of the growing revolution when the activity of the advanced ranks of the people is at its height, and when the *vacillations* in the ranks of the enemy and *in the ranks of the weak, halfhearted and irresolute friends of the revolution* are strongest. That is the third point. And these three conditions for raising the question of insurrection distinguish *Marxism from blanquism.*

> "Once these conditions exist, however, to refuse to treat insurrection as an *art* is a betrayal of Marxism and a betrayal of revolution" (ibid, p 365)

He calls for concentrating all the forces of the bolsheviks in the factories and barracks, organising a headquarters of the insurgent detachments, moving the reliable regiments to the most important points, occupying strategic points, arresting the general staff and the government, taking over the telephone exchange and connecting the headquarters of the insurrection with all the factories, all the regiments, all the points of armed fighting.

On 19 September Lenin is of the view that the crisis has matured. He is of the view that proletarian revolutionary outbreaks are on the agenda in Germany and Italy, that a peasant revolt is 'developing throughout Russia, that the petty bourgeoisie and the people have turned away from the Kerensky coalition government, that the bolsheviks and their allies have a majority in the Soviets, in the army and in the country as a whole. He now issues an ultimatum to the central committee that he will resign from it unless it discusses his proposals and starts the work of organising the insurrection. He is now of the view that the success of the Russian revolution depends on the two or three days' fighting.

On 10 October 1917, the central committee of the Bolshevik Party passed the following terse and even classically austere resolution:

> "The central committee recognises that the internal position of the Russian revolution (the revolt in the German navy which is an extreme manifestation of the growth throughout Europe of the world socialist revolution; the threat of peace by the imperialists with the object of strangling the revolution in Russia) as well as the military situation, (the indubitable 'decision of the Russian bourgeoisie and Kerensky and Co to surrender Petrograd to the Germans), and the fact that the proletarian party has gained a majority in the Soviets—all this, taken in conjunction with the peasant revolt and the swing of popular confidence towards our party (the elections in Moscow), and, finally, the obvious preparations being mad$_e$ for a second Kornilov revolt (the withdrawal of troops from Petrograd, the dispatch of Cossacks to Petrograd, the encircling of Minsk by Cossacks, etc.)—all this places the armed uprising on the order of the day" (ibid, p 436).

But Lenin was far from satisfied with having secured the passage of this resolution. He kept up an incessant barrage at the central committee meeting of 16 October, by the vehement denunciation of the public opposition to the armed uprising by Kamenev and Zinoviev (both central committee members) as strike-breaking 'deserving expulsion and by continuous appeals for the concrete organisation of the armed uprising.

On 24 October, the "night before", he writes again:

> "With all my might I urge comrades to realise that everything now hangs by a (thread; that we are confronted by problems which are not to be solved by conferences or congresses (even congresses of Soviets), but exclusively by peoples, by the masses, by the struggle of the armed people... "We must not wait! We may lose everything! ... "All districts, all regiments, all forces must be mobilised at once and must immediately send their delegations to the revolutionary military committee and to the central committee of the bolsheviks with the insistent demand that under no circumstances should power be left in the hands of Kerensky and Co until the 25th—not under any circumstances; the matter must be decided without fail this very evening, or this very night."History will not forgive revolutionaries for

> procrastinating when they could be victorious today (and they certainly will be victorious today), while they risk losing much tomorrow, in fact, they risk losing everything" (ibid, pp 449-50).

On 25 October at 10 a.m. the appeal went out to the citizens of Russia that the soviet revolution had triumphed:

> "The cause tor which the people hav$_e$ fought, namely, the immediate offer of a democratic peace, the abolition of landed proprietorship, workers' control over production, and the establishment of soviet power- this cause has been secured" (ibid, p 451).
>
> The socialist dictatorship of the proletariat had been established and the greatest revolution of all times crowned with stupendous success.

4 Indian Revolution- Historical Experience

The Indian revolution goes back to the beginnings of the assimilation and resistance which marked the onset of modern capitalist civilisation in our country. The onset was the onset of colonialism. It was colonialism with its relatively brief regenerative period, though this too was covered with blood and dirt. But, in essence and taking a long view, it was colonialism that was the main reason why India is so utterly poor, illiterate and full of injustice. Industrialisation, education, a modicum of democracy, science and the rest of the aspects of modernity were all denied our people because they were a people dispossessed—dispossessed of their sovereignty, their dignity and of their present. A nation without a present cannot have a future. It has first to be in order to persist.

It was against this fate that there was revolt, even as those who revolted came to realise that assimilation of modernity was part of that revolt. Indeed it was this that gave the revolt the dimensions of a revolution, the Indian revolution of modern times.

The story is well known enough. Only a few salient facts-and an attempt at interpretation would therefore suffice.

The beginnings are reminiscent of the Luddite phase of the anti- capitalist struggle of the British working class, or the phase of primitive rebels. The first peasant and tribal revolts had this character, understandable enough and heroic for their time but surely an anachronism today. They signified that instinctively the villages of India were opposed to their spoliation by the towns of England. But little more than instinct and it could not be sustained. I am more than a little sceptical about how much of it survived even as tradition. In any event their abortive nature proves that in the middle and closing decades of their eighteenth century the social forces of revolt in India were not subjectively ready nor their level of understanding of the requisite order, though their resistance had an objectively revolutionary significance in a retrospective sense. To make these revolts models for today's revolutionaries is to misread history and to lead to a relapse.

If these rebellions were without perspective, the first reaction of the urbanised landlord-rooted intelligentsia was without sufficient historical sense or sensibility. Despite all the new facts that have come to light about these pioneers of westernisation, like Rammohun Roy, Derozio or Iswarchandra Vidyasagar, the basic fact remains that they hoped to achieve the modernisation of Indian society without the prior liquidation of British rule. Indeed they looked forward to cooperation with this rule in the task of the regeneration of India. Their patriotism is as undoubted as their lack of realism. This was perhaps a reflex of the pseudo- urbanisation that was going on in India at the time and the ambivalent position of the intelligentsia with their roots in feudal exploitation but their aspirations in the direction of industrial and commercial entrepreneurship. It was a process and a position and an ideological reflex that shut out more than a sentimental sympathy for the masses. It led to almost total isolation from the people and in the end to efforts that were scarcely less futile than their luddite predecessors in the long line of the so- called Indian 'response' to the 'challenge' of colonialism.

The Bengal renaissance has been the subject of so much controversy recently. And rightly so. The controversy is stirred up not so much by historical evaluation as by the search that goes on today for a national-democratic ideology. There can be no denying the brilliance of the best minds of the Bengal renaissance nor of the fact that through their attachment to as well as

propagation of humanism, rationalism and secularism they undoubtedly rendered historical service and left a tradition. Nevertheless lack of anti- colonialism and of organic links with the masses were very grave historical limitations.

This was illustrated in the negative way that some of the most typical representatives reacted to the first war of Indian independence launched by the Indian peasants in uniform in 1857. Yet this rebellion was more truly revolutionary than anything that had gone before and anything that was to come till the 1919-20 upheaval. It is quite unhistorical to analyse it as a feudal throwback or counterrevolution as some quite eminent Marxists have done, starting from M. N. Roy and R. Palme Dutt. But not from Marx or Engels. It is they who understood it as the first war of Indian independence, which was what it was. It was a feat of historical imagination to agree to place Bahadur Shah in the role of a mascot by both hindus and muslims.

It was the wahabi reformation that proved much of the ideological ballast of the uprising. And as the most valuable researches of Tahniz Khaldun have shown, the institution called the court of the mutineers foreshadowed much of the modern principles of governance, testifying to the glimmerings of modern consciousness among the awakened and organised peasants. It testified to the fact that the urbanised intellectual was not the only intelligentsia that India possessed, let alone the only focal point of consciousness. One of the great heroes of 1857 is general Bakht Khan. But it will not of course do to indulge in mere glorification. The Indian sepoys and their daring commanders had by no means shaken off their feudal affiliations. They had no comprehensive programme even of a Utopian character as their near-contemporaries, the Taipings. They relied too heavily on feudal leadership whose weaknesses could not be compensated by the primitive vigour of peasant democracy. Hence the disunity, lack of organisation, parochialism, failure to sustain guerilla operations and lack of a countervailing force against feudal betrayal.

The lack of geographical spread was a handicap, but too much need not be read into this as many others, more vital, revolutionary movements also lacked this element of simultaneous explosion, e.g. China in the 1920s or, indeed, right up to the great finale of 1949. As a matter of fact the defeat of the 1857 uprising (sustained for almost two years) showed that while the peasant was no longer a mere primitive rebel, he "was not able to produce that independent power and projection with sufficient attractive force of an alternative future system that could bring down the industrial colonialism of the west. The peasant lacked a modern leader or at least a modern ally, a lack that has not been fully made up even today.

The next phase comes into focus with another spurt of activity by the intelligentsia. This time it was more spread out. It had also acquired more direct political tones and it had begun a radical critique, especially in the economic sphere, of British rule in India. It went on to organise itself, taking the form eventually of the Indian National Congress. It developed a programme of action, demanding reforms, an end to economic spoliation, greater participation of the Indian intelligentsia in the British administration of India, the starting of India on the road to industrialisation, social reforms and partially representative government. The intelligentsia had also-grown and proliferated as compared to what its position was some 50 years ago. The liberal independent professions had developed many fold as compared to the first decades of the nineteenth century. The intelligentsia had not of course cut its roots with feudal exploitation altogether but it was no longer landlord-based exclusively. It had begun its existence as a social stratum with a kind of self generating capacity. Some-among them had tried their hand at industrialisation but with little success.

While it is true that some of the wealthier members of the intelligentsia did try to turn their money into capital and did play a part in the start of capitalist relations of production in India, it is not they who played the foremost Dart in this process. The moneylender and trader were the forefathers in the-main of the Indian capitalist class. The intelligentsia was not the product of the changes brought about in the economy and society as a whole by the activities of the capitalist class. It preceded the capitalist class and developed later as well along parallel lines.

While this did lead to certain serious weaknesses—a lack of rootedness in the production process and an inclination of imitativeness—it had its advantages also. Large sections of the intelligentsia developed who had no direct links with exploitation and with the capitalist class itself. The total lack of opportunity that British imperialist rule represented, coupled with this distance from exploitation, produced an irresistible impulse towards radicalism in the intelligentsia. It made easier the transition, many decades later and after much else had happened from a so-called independent liberal intelligentsia to the white-collar workers.

Nevertheless one should not anticipate too much. At the point of time we are concerned with at the moment the best representatives of the intelligentsia, while critical of some of the results of British imperialist rule, were still convinced of the possibility of cooperation with the British rulers to further the modernisation and prosperity of India. The only thing required was to make the British in Britain aware of the un-British rule in India and to convince them that there were enough brown Britishers who could be relied upon to carry through the providential mission of the British. There was no end at that time of the protestations of loyalty to whoever happened to be sitting on the imperial throne, generally the portly personage called Victoria. The endeavour of the intelligentsia was to organise itself so that mild mannered petitions could be presented both to the authorities in India and even more to those in Britain. Mass agitation and the objective of self rule were furthest from their minds. This is true of such great and typical representatives of this intelligentsia as Dadabhai Naoroji and Romesh Chunder Dutt.

One has however to note two other points. The intellectual contributions that the best representatives of the intelligentsia made in this period were not surpassed or even equalled for many decades, if at all. The only comparison one can make is with the studies that Marxist and socialist intellectuals made towards the end of our struggle for freedom. And these were committed intellectuals driven to inquiry and publication by their concern for the misery of India and their desire for its regeneration. It is from among them that some branched off to try to provide a picture of the past of India that would show the capacity of its people for self- government and give to them a sense of self- respect. The contributions that they made to the recovery of the Indian people, laid prostrate by British conquest, are invaluable despite their limitations.

One of the characteristic features of the Indian freedom struggle, which was the form of the first stage of the modern Indian revolution, was its constant expansion of social base, both in the rank and file as well as in the leadership. This perhaps is a characteristic of all national-liberation movements but is very definitely a marked feature of what took place in our country in any case. This expansion of social base, drawing in ever-more disinherited classes and strata, did not straightaway result in their independent activity. And until this happened there was no withdrawal of any clas$_s$ from the movement either, though adaptations and compromises were in evidence from time to time.

And it is also a characteristic feature that even if these 'lower' classes and strata did not move at once and even sufficiently if we take the period as a whole, their influence was undoubtedly felt in the fairly linear progress of the programme of the freedom struggle to the left. Not that this was achieved smoothly and spontaneously. It was not. It was achieved

through conflict, through bitter struggle and even splits. A left shift was not always unambiguous and not always seen through consistently from programmatic proclamation to actual implementation. And the forces of the left were far from always able to take advantage of such a shift. But the shift itself is unmistakable.

These two features of the first stage of the Indian revolution come clearly to focus with the emergence of Bal Gangadhar Tilak as the undoubted leader of the new phase from about the end of the 19th century to the first decade and a half of our century. With Tilak modern radical democracy makes its appearance in our country. Nor was he a solitary figure, though unique in his eminence at the time. It is often wrongly posed as if Tilak was radical nationally, but reactionary socially. The conflict really focused on what would be the centre for mass activity, for agitation and propaganda among the masses. As far as personal conduct was concerned, Tilak proved equal, if not superior, to many of his contemporaries who placed prior stress on social reforms. Tilak not only projected a new programme- swaraj or home rule—as the objective to be attained but shifted the emphasis on the means for attaining this objective. The shift was quite revolutionary in its implications —from persuading the rulers whether in India or in England to rousing the masses to action, to inculcating a sense of outraged pride among them.

If we judge Tilak with the yardstick of the level of consciousness reached by the leadership or the masses in the 1930s as Jawaharlal Nehru did in a rather debonair fashion, then of course we shall find it quite easy to wonder what was so very radical about him. He did not call for complete independence nor did he propagate any programme of changes in the land system. These were certainly his historical limitations. But his achievement was stupendous by any standard. It marked a decisive turn in the character of the freedom struggle. No doubt the objective conditions for such a turn had matured but the pressures emanating from changed objective conditions transform themselves into historical action through the process of refraction in the consciousness of classes. And the consciousness of classes is also shaped by the action of leading personalities. That India was not to be a mestizo nation, a second-rate imitation of the west and that India would come into its own on the basis of the action of it_s people—these were tremendous thoughts tor those times. And even more tremendous was the making of these thoughts a kind of banner and programme for the people, especially in the urban areas.

Those were the days of the swadeshi movement and the struggle against the partition of Bengal. The urban middle strata, or petty bourgeoisie, certainly formed the bulk of the leadership and active participants of this movement. At the same time the main beneficiaries from this movement were the nascent Indian capitalist class. Again we find that the main components of the Indian capitalist class in this period as well came not from the intelligentsia but from the traders, moneylenders and a section which had begun to turn to industry a short while previously. And it should be remembered that the weakening of imperialism politically as well as economically was of great benefit to the nation as a whole and not only to the advantage of the capitalist class.

Two further important issues have to be discussed here. One is the use that Tilak made of certain traditional hindu festivals and of the Maratha hero Shivaji. It has been stated by some scholars, even Marxists, that this represented an attempt to revive medievalism and helped the later development of hindu communalism. It is even suggested that the drift of the muslim intelligentsia to communalism and separatism dates from this time.

These arguments are only partially true. But their essential weakness is their lack of historicalness. What was the ideology available to Tilak, both personally as a patriot and as a leader who wished to move 'his' masses, i.e. the petty bourgeoisie, into action against imperialism? It would be wrong to imagine that Tilak believed in some so- called nationalism but preached medievalism out of some pragmatic or opportunist considerations. There is absolutely no evidence which would bear out this analysis. On the contrary all the available evidence would indicate that the author of *Gita Rahasya* and the *Arctic Home of the Vedas* fully believed what he wrote. And it was this belief that helped to popularise an activist interpretation of the **traditional** hindu beliefs. And precisely because it was an activist interpretation of the ideological stock-in-trade of the urban middle strata, it did certainly play a very important role in moving them into action. Against whom? Against imperialism. And an ideological trend which at that time played such an important anti-imperialist role can certainly be termed progressive. Because use was made of this at a later date by the pro-imperialist communal forces does not mean that it was reactionary to start with. Lenin's characterisation of Tilak as an Indian democrat was not casually made since we now know that he had a basically similar approach to Gandhiji,

As for the alienation of muslims, this again was only partially the case. The muslims of Bombay participated in the Shivaji as well as the Ganesh festivals. And there is quite a lot of evidence regarding muslim participation in and sympathy for the swadeshi and the Bengal antipartition movement despite all the machinations of the British imperialists. The muslim alienation from the mainstream of the national movement came moreover much later- in the thirties. And there were other factors responsible for this. The most important of these was the failure to turn the national movement as a whole or in the main into radical-democratic channels, commit it to radical *'action* for the implementation of a programme that was radical enough. This was the failure above all of the left forces in the national movement since the right and the centre, by their very nature, could scarcely be expected to be very active in implementing (sometimes even in accepting) a radical programme.

We shall attempt to analyse this failure a little more closely further on. And the result of this failure, combined with the centrist compromises with imperialism and calling off of struggles and opposition to independent class organisations and actions, gave ample opportunities to the imperialists and the rightist sections to spread the poison of communalism. Another very important contributory factor was the later development of the modern muslim intelligentsia, though this evaluation is disputed these days. Pressures of competition with the established hindu professional strata created a sense of bitterness. This is a phenomenon with which recent developments have made us all too familiar. It is a striking fact that the leaders of the separatist communal trend among the muslims were the westernised intellectuals. Many of the traditional muslim intellectuals remained loyal both to islam and to anti-imperialist nationalism. This contrast is to be seen in the different approaches to the Deoband School and the Aligarh Muslim University and between what M. A. Jinnah was and what Khan Abdul Ghatfar Khan was and remains. It is not so easy to get at all the reasons for the complex phenomenon of muslim separatism. And it is certainly far too simplistic to put it all down to the particular idiom and style of agitation and propaganda adopted by Tilak, for whom the anti-imperialist approach was the starting point of everything.

In parenthesis, at this stage, let it suffice to say that India is a nation in the making even today and Indian nationalism would he tar nearer to what is called the complex of soviet patriotism than to a single-nation nationalism, to use a clumsy term. And it would be even more complicated than that since there is no dominant nationality in India as the Russians were

numerically, economically and culturally. At the same time, with the creation of the all-India market and the anti-imperialist movement that did spread throughout the country, Indian patriotism might be an accomplished and supervening fact prior to the full evolution of the various nationalities that inhabit our subcontinent. Yet another complicating issue is after Burma was separated in 1935 and Pakistan established in 1947, what exactly constitutes that historically evolving and, persistent entity called India?

It needs, however, to be categorically stated that any attempt to use the religious form of mobilisation today is utterly reactionary. And even in Tilak's time it had its inherent drawbacks.

Another related problem that we must briefly discuss here is that of individual terrorism which emerged as a significant trend in this period. And it emerged precisely in those parts of the country where the new upsurge of the national movement also had taken place. The British imperialists from one point of view and some nationalist historians from another have connected this directly with the work of Tilak. It is no doubt true that Tilak's break with petitionism, his masterly interpretation of the *Gita* in an activist spirit which carried the implication that all action was blessed which had duty as its mainspring and his refusal to condemn violence or advocate nonviolence as a creed must hav$_e$ and did influence some of the younger intrepid spirits to launch out into acts of individual terrorism. And when they did Tilak, and not only he, recognised the nobility of the motive as well as the spirit of complete self- sacrifice behind the deeds. He also helped them personally.

But the approach of Tilak to the problem of the struggle against British imperialism was certainly *not* conspiratorial. Nor was it one of 'shocking[7] the people into action by the 'propaganda of the deed'. His entire approach was one o£ rousing the masses and getting them to participate in the movement in as massive a manner as possible. He was a propagandist, agitator and organiser who believed in utilising moreover all the avenues open to him to rouse the people. It was this approach -that was more militant and revolutionary than the anarchist outlook of the undoubtedly brave souls who took to the revolver and tried to use it against particularly hated representatives of British raj. It had a far greater and far more lasting effect on the masses, gave them a sense of pride and participation and produced from them heroes on a mass scale, leading to their spiritual emancipation even before their physical freedom had been won.

As a continuation of as well as a qualitative leap forward from this phase of the first stage of the Indian revolution, we have the coming on to the scene of Gandhiji.

It is of course sheer nonsense to imagine that India was only slumbering till Gandhiji came on the scene. The Indian people had been and were on the move for decades. The crisis of imperialism and little later the impact of the 1917 October revolution had a powerful impact on the mind of India. (It may be added here that recent researches have shown how much greater this impact was than had been previously understood. This is an excellent illustration of the actuality of partisanship in the writing of history which some historians deny but all of whom practise. Partisanship, however, should not be equated with tactical utilitarianism or the suppression of facts. The latter is not dialectical materialist partisanship but a variety of idealist pragmatism.) The peasantry had begun to stir. The working class had begun to move.

Developing capitalism had begun its penetration of the Indian village not only in the shape of commercial transactions and usurious capital but also in the form of the start of a process of differentiation among the peasants themselves with the rise of a thin stratum of rich peasants in some areas of the country. The First World War and its exigencies had led to a spurt of

industrialisation to meet part of the supply needs of the imperialist war machine and the amount of liquid capital with the Indian capitalists also increased considerably. The strengthening of the Indian capitalist class industrially was no evidence that decolonisation had taken place, as M. N. Roy and the earlier work of R. Palme Dutt, *Modern India* (1925) had suggested. Nor was it true to say that the degree of industrialisation achieved had led to a position where the capitalist class was more anxious to strike a deal with imperialism. The stratification inside the Indian capitalist class had also not taken place to the extent of two clearly-defined groups— one of which was about to go over to imperialism, as Stalin wrongly analysed in his address to the students of the University of the Toilers of the East in 1925. AS a matter of fact, it is open to question whether the categories- compradore and national—suited the situation of the Indian capitalist class at all in this period. It would seem to be nearer the truth to state that Indian capitalism as a whole took up an oppositional role *vis-a-vis* British imperialism from this time onwards. It began to feel that it could realise its ambition of winning independence and establishing a full-fledged capitalist India. At the same time, it realised that British imperialists could not be driven out of India without a mass struggle and that such a mass struggle on a nationwide scale spelt danger not only to the imperialists but also to itself. Hence its ambivalent attitude to the mass movement and its proneness to compromise with imperialism.

Such an attitude of half-heartedness was also the result of the evolution of this class, the decisive segments of which had developed more along the second path of capitalist development analysed by Marx rather than the 'really revolutionary' way of manufacturer or commodity-producer-capitalist which he contrasted to the former. The Indian industrial capitalist of this period had a dual character of a peculiar and specific kind. On the one hand he made the turn from trade and money lending to industry in the teeth of opposition from British imperialists. On the other he never cut of his connections with his feudal, semi- feudal and trading relationships of a pre- capitalist character. He tended to batten on the petty commodity producers and not to release their production potential, even through the path of blood and dirt as the inevitable agonising consequence of differentiation.

Nevertheless the turn in India from trading to industry on the part of decisive segments of the Indian capitalist class and of the British colonialists to the export of capital alongside the export of commodities did lead to the growth of capitalist relations and to the augmentation of the ranks of the industrial working class. It did lead to the further penetration of commercial relations into Indian agriculture and the further development of a small rich peasant stratum. In any event the ruin and pauperisation of the Indian peasantry proceeded apace without his conversion into the new hell of industrial proletarianisation. And the urban middle strata, especially the intelligentsia, were also growing but faced with lack of prospects except the nightmare of bankruptcy. A few succeeded through betrayal or luck but it faced as a class or conglomeration of strata a bleak and sombre vista.

It was against this background and among a people who had gone through the experience of the swadeshi movement that Gandhiji strode forward. It has been quite aptly and correctly pointed out by S. A. Dange that it was the Indian masses in their revolutionary motion that made Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi the Mahatma and not the other way round. His creative role and tremendous contribution are not to be denied. But it is not he who made men out of dust. It is the dusty, dirty toilers who made the foremost anti-imperialist organiser out of the recruiting-sergeant for imperialism. This process of transformation had started in South Africa. It was completed in India. The greatness of the man lay in his capacity to respond to

the growing anger and militancy of the people and to create the organisation and the techniques that made a material force out of this anger.

It has been claimed that the most important contribution that Gandhiji made was his stress upon noble means without which the noble end of the emancipation of India could not be achieved. It has been said that his unique gift to India was the message of nonviolence. Ostensibly and maybe even sincerely many of those who state all this about Gandhiji are wanting to boost him but they are actually denigrating his place in history. If what they say was all that there was to Gandhiji, then he would be little better than a glorified preacher of precious platitudes. There have been many such preachers and there would be many more in the future. To give to Gandhiji a so- called supra- historical position, to refuse to evaluate his concrete historical role and contribution is to deny him his true greatness.

Take the question of means and ends. Where is the philosopher or the activist who would choose means that do not lead to the desired end and justify this position theoretically? To state that any means is good enough if it leads to the desired end is simply bad philosophy and worse logic. The end imposes the pattern of means, taken broadly and over a reasonable time span. Means and ends are in organic relationship or in a state of dialectical tension. This was known many, many years before Gandhiji was born and it was known all over the world. What about nonviolence? As far as the Mahatma himself was concerned, he believed in it and propagated it. But he never insisted upon its acceptance as a creed by the Congress. He recommended it in the form of satyagraha and hartals as the most effective form of struggle in the Indian situation. And in this he was right. It was only in the first mass movement which he led that he called it off because of the violence at Chauri Chaura. He never repeated this. And we have it on authentic record that he told the communist detenus at Meerut in 1929 that he would not again withdraw the movement be- cause of sporadic violence. We have his stand in 1942, where the entire emphasis was on "Do or Die'' and where he attacked the leonine violence of British imperialism and held it responsible for what he called a sense of national outrage, bordering at times on insanity. We have his earlier permission to the Congress leadership to go ahead to form the national government which would help the military defence of India against the Japanese fascists. We have his tacit blessing to the move to send the Indian army to Srinagar in 1947 to save it from the aggressors based on Pakistan. We have his famous interview with Louis Fischer prior to the 1942 movement where he is not in the least disturbed at the prospect of the violence and strife that might result from the peasants dispossessing the landlords. And lastly we have the final overwhelming and poignant incident, narrated by Professor Nirmal Kumar Bose, in Calcutta in 1948 when he told (through Professor Bose) a group of hindu youths armed with stenguns and bombs that he was with them in their armed defence of the muslim minority. When he was asked as to how he could do such a thing or issue such a command, he replied that he had no alternative to offer.

More examples could be cited but the above are enough to show that Gandhiji never insisted that nonviolence had to be the creed of the anti-imperialist struggle in India. Nonviolence was his creed and it was certainly his dream that this should become the creed of his countrymen. But here of course he was a total failure and his life, if judged by this, would have to be described as an unmitigated disaster. His achievement was not in this sphere but in the organisation of the anti-imperialist movement and there he succeeded in ample measure and became one of the unforgettables of Indian and world history.

His greatest contribution, unparalleled yet by any other revolutionary leader in India, was to bring the peasant into the anti-imperialist movement. Here, as in the case of Tilak, the problem of revivalism comes up. The answer would be approximately the same. To rouse the peasant to anti-imperialist action there had to be roused in him the wish for change. Often enough this is best done by a glorification of the past and a powerful desire aroused for a return to it. Ram rajya or the idealisation of the ancient Asiatic village community stirred the soul of the Indian peasant. And the charkha provided a certain modicum of relief which enabled him to be able to spare some time for thought. And the appeal was particularly powerful in its impact on the rural intelligentsia, the offspring of the smaller landlord and the rich peasant. And they acted as the unifiers of the entire peasantry against foreign rule. But as far as anti- feudal struggle was concerned, including the dispossession of the landlords, they certainly could not act as the pioneers and initiators. Nor was Gandhiji cast to play that role. What has to be said to his eternal credit is that he responded to the radicalisation of the peasants after an initial and fairly long period of resistance to any anti- landlord action by the peasants. We find this in his interview with Louis Fischer mentioned earlier in his reiteration that *Sabhi bhumi Gopal ki* in his acceptance of the implications of the Karachi charter as well as the presidential addresses of Nehru at Lucknow, Faizpur and of Subhas Bose at Haripura. Increasingly his stress falls upon the egalitarianism of the vanished Ram rajya.

Indeed, the pre- capitalist utopianism of Gandhiji also brought him close to anti- capitalist positions. His *Hind Swaraj,* which he upheld as his credo to the very end, makes very odd reading with its condemnation of railways, hospitals and all the apparatus of modern western civilisation as the inventions of Satan. He was totally opposed to what he termed the mad rush of industrialism. He was not particularly attached to the parliamentary system with its pyramidical structure, advancing in its stead the oceanic concept with the village as the focus and source of political power which would spread out in concentric circles. He advocated austerity as the only means to equality in poverty- engulfed India. Limitation of wants was his ideal against the galloping consumption standards postulated by modern capitalist civilisation.

There is no doubt that right from the start of his political work in India to the very end when he discerned 'red ruin' in the magnificent unity of the rebellious RIN ratings and the working people of Bombay, Gandhiji was opposed to bolshevism. He clearly formulated his philosophy, programme and technique of mass action as the only possible alternative to the taking over of India by the bolsheviks, albeit Indian by birth, lie admired the passion and sacrifice of Lenin as he did of many Indian communists whom he personally knew. He claimed that he practised what the communists hoped to implement in the future. But he never forsook his really absurd prejudices against the basic tenets of communism.

But his opposition to communism was not from the standpoint of capitalism or the characteristic ideology of capitalism, whether it be liberalism or social-democratism. He opposed the very idea of the industrialisation of India. He was opposed to the profit motive and wanted all industries that were of any sizable scale to be nationalised and the rest to be held in trust by the capitalists. He was as much opposed to the-outlook of modern capitalism as he was to that of modern socialism.

His outlook was that of peasant anarchism. He was not in favour of the independent, conscious and class-motivated action of the peasants. They were to act but under him and even through him. It was substitutionism on a colossal scale. He was particularly opposed to the independent actions of the working class, let alone its pioneer or vanguard role. He wanted to

plough his peasant furrow but it can scarcely be denied that in the ultimate analysis it was the capitalist class which benefited most from his activity though certainly the people as a whole also gained greatly. But because this was the end result, it would be going against the spirit of the Marxist method to conclude therefrom that Gandhiji's outlook and activity represented the national bourgeoisie of India. A difference has to be made between the ideological reflex of the result. Gandhism was the ideological reflex of the peasant petty bourgeoisie but the outcome of his activity was beneficial to the nation as a whole, but particularly to the national bourgeoisie. There are many other examples in history of such a seemingly paradoxical position.

The failure of gandhism to bring the peasant into his own illustrates again the inherent incapacity of that conglomerate class (in the period of the anti- feudal, anti- landlord struggle) to achieve its aims on its own. It has to seek allies and find a leader, at least in conditions where the other modern classes —the capitalists and the workers- are already on the scene. Where these two modern classes have not formed themselves or are of relatively little significance, the representatives of the petty bourgeoisie can and do play a relatively more independent role over a more prolonged period of time. But this is possible only in the conditions of the new epoch which dates from the 1950s, where the world working class, acting chiefly through the world socialist system, plays an increasingly decisive role in social transformations on a world scale.

These conditions—the role of the world working class in the new epoch and the practical absence of the capitalist and working classes on the national plane—did not obtain in India at the time when Gandhiji was the supreme leader. It is to-be regretted that the more farsighted representatives of the capitalist class in India had a clearer understanding of the potential of peasant Gandhi than did the representatives of the working class who adopted, taking the period as a whole, rather sectarian and supercilious approach. Without being conscious of it, the representatives of the working class in India were following M. N. Roy rather than Lenin! We have it on the authority of the former that Lenin considered Gandhiji a revolutionary in so far as he was a leader and inspirer of a mass movement. Fart at least of this mistake was the rather restricted vision of the communists in India who tended to analyse the Indian situation only along bipolar lines and who absolutised the instability and long-term incapacity of the petty bourgeoisie and peasantry to act independently to the point where they played no role at all or an extremely ephemeral one alter which they would inevitably go over to the bourgeoisie. The vital concept of the worker-peasant alliance- was not sufficiently concretised taking account of the full richness of the peculiarities of the Indian situation. The undoubtedly reactionary views of Gandhiji on a wide range of issues, his curbing ol the mass movement at crucial moments and his compromises with imperialism as well as his hostility to the communists loomed too large and shut out of vision the great contribution that he was making to the anti-imperialist struggle and the basically peasant character of his outlook. Gandhiji was the Indian peasant, Nehru often used to say, and with a good measure of truth. This tended to be overlooked by Indian communists. It can be said here that the Indian communists preferred the bipolar analysis of the first volume of *Capital* to the more jostling one of the third volume.

Another point that needs examination is the balance sheet of Gandhiji's activities as far as hindu-muslim unity is concerned. Here once again, as in the case of Tilak, the criticism is made that the language of Gandhiji, his prayer meetings, his insistence on nonviolence and the rest helped to spread communalism or at least brought grist to the mill of the communalists. This appears to be unbalanced criticism. The main result of the work 'and preaching of Gandhiji was the partial turning

of the awakened hindu masses to secularism and nationalism and away from communalism and casteism. He did not succeed completely by any means, as the partition tragedy only too grimly showed. Nevertheless more than any other single individual and on a massive scale he was able to place a picture of a secular India and of communal unity. The fact that India chose to remain a secular republic is in a large measure due to him. The hindu communalist felt at an enormous disadvantage in combating him since it was impossible to contest the 'indianness' or the 'hinduness' of the man or to dispute that what he was telling the people sprang from the very depths of the traditions of India. It was as if the seventeenth-century bhakti saints had started walking the Indian earth again.

Nevertheless it cannot be denied that Gandhiji and the entire national movement failed to attract the muslim masses .as the days went on. The muslim masses increasingly turned to the communalists except in the case of the North West Frontier Province where Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan was able to hold the tort for the Congress almost to the very end and was then thrown to the wolves for his pains—leaving a deep scar of bitterness so evident when Badshah Khan visited India recently. And the exception is significant. Where there was relatively less muslim middleclass development, more complete merger of the nationality question and the muslim question, and where the mass movement was kept at an ever-ascending level there Indian patriotism was able to come into its own. But where uneven development created a problem of middle-class! employment, where the question of being a religious minority came in, where the peasantry was confronted with landlords and usurers generally coming from the other community and where the problem of the development of nationality got distorted because of all these factors, there muslim communalism was able to acquire a powerful mass base.

It cannot be forgotten moreover that Gandhiji and Nehru were not the only leaders of the Congress. Maulana Azad has put it on record that there were hindu communalists at the very highest levels of the Congress. A more important factor was the one mentioned earlier, i.e. the failure to carry out consistent and militant struggle, the calling off of struggles leading to frustration and creating moods of despair which were conducive to the spread of communalism. But Gandhiji alone cannot be blamed for this, though his share of the blame is large. It will be remembered that at the end of the whole drama, Gandhiji counselled the rejection of the British plan for partition and the start of yet another civil disobedience movement. It is on record that both Pandit Nehru and Sardar Patel turned down this suggestion on the ground that they felt that they had become too old for another round of jail-going- this they said to a man who was about twenty years older and who was advocating the line of struggle!

Then one has to take account of the failure of the left, including the communists. The left were certainly completely secular. They were certainly quite consistent in their attitude towards the question of struggle (the CPI's attitude during the 1942 movement was based on quite other considerations). They did organise, especially the CPI, the workers, peasants and students along lines of class or stratum or on the basis of interest-orientation, to use the current jargon. But still, except in isolated pockets, they were not able to prevent the spread of communalism and even today they are far from being always successful in doing so. Their failure is of course linked up with their larger failure to come anywhere near achieving the leadership of the national movement. But it is also due to another factor. Their general approach was that through the economic struggles the masses would spontaneously achieve unity. They were certainly right in stressing the importance of economic struggles, without which there would be no base to build upon. This was a necessary condition for combating communalism but by no means a, sufficient condition. Lenin had taught long ago that economism is a deadly disease

which prevents the left, or the scientific socialists, from carrying out one of its most important functions— the raising of the ideological-political consciousness of the workers and other sections of the toiling people. The attitude of the left, generally speaking, was one of denying that the muslim question had its specific 'dialectics.

An important exception to this was the effort of the CPI—in which the names of K. M. Ashraf and G. Adhikari come foremost to mind. Many of the points about the uneven development of the intelligentsia in India, on a religious basis, were first put forward by Dr Ashraf. Dr Adhikari linked the question of communal unity with that of the growth of nationalities in India. Both were very important and creative applications of the method and doctrine of Marx and Lenin to a very specific situation and problem of India. Mistakes were subsequently made in extending this analysis to a tacit support of Pakistan and to propounding the theory of muslim nationalities. But this does not vitiate the validity and value of the original theses. If the- communist and left movement in general had been able to unitedly campaign on this basis and carry the bulk of the centrists in the Congress with them, the whole contemporary history of India could have been so very different. It is significant that Gandhiji and Nehru both came quite close to accepting this thesis but by that time it was too late and there was no massive campaign.

While the divisive rol_e of imperialism and the compromising character of the leadership of the Congress should not be overlooked in any discussion of the problem and while the contribution of Ashraf and Adhikari did reveal important new facets of the problem, it should also be borne in mind that there is such a thing as the problem of religious minorities as such. The problem of the Indian muslims falls partially within this category as well. It is too simplistic a view of historical development to overlook this aspect of the question. There are hangovers of the past which are very tenacious and which can even burgeon when in the economy the roots of these hangovers have not been eliminated. Even when they are so eliminated the hangovers persist and exert a tremendous pernicious influence. Ideological-political work is enormously important in this connection. This involves a deep understanding of the history and traditions and consequent spiritual makeup of Indian muslims. Work on this problem cannot even begin if the problem itself is not recognised.

It is important to recognise that the last three decades of the freedom struggle, though dominated by Gandhiji and the gandhians, saw the emergence, evolution and development of many trends. And it is interesting to note that of these only the communist- trend persists in more or less the same organised form, despite the split of 1964.

The communist trend can be taken first. There is some dispute as to whether the foundation date of the party should be taken as October 1920 in Tashkent or as December 1925 in Kanpur. Examination of evidence would however lead one to the conclusion that while the CPI set up at Tashkent was recognised by the Third International, it did not have any branches in India nor did the delegates assembled there come with any mandate from any communist groups in India. Nor is it correct to state that it was the delegates from the Tashkent conference who came back to India and got the CPI going. It is true that the Comintern and in particular M. N. Roy played an important role in -ideologically and politically guiding and aiding the communist groups in India. But the coming together of these groups was also due to the strenuous efforts of communists within the country, particularly those working in Calcutta, Bombay, Lahore and Madras. These groups had quite some years of work behind them, both in the field of trade-union organisation and also in the national movement itself. Those who actually organised the Kanpur communist conference in 1925 came to communism out of their experience of class struggle and the national struggle. And it was this experience that attracted them to the theory which had guided those who made the

great October socialist revolution in 1917. This is not the place to write the history of the communist movement in India. The origin is mentioned only to refute the rather stupid slanders of the CPI being a formation of foreign agents.

But is it not a fact that the communists of India accepted and accept the philosophy of Marxism-Leninism and are not Marx and Lenin foreigners? And is there not a communist party in power in several countries, especially Russia? In that case, how can it be denied that the communists of India are 'foreign' to India?

This concept of the ideology of a party having to be homemade if the party is to be recognised as homegrown is thoroughly fallacious. What is homemade ideology anyway? The so- called Aryan ancestors of the present day hindus were immigrants and came to India with their myths, rituals and customs. In clash and convergence with the indigenous tribes gradually rigvedic and then vedic systems of thought and manual of rites and customs evolved. The same remarks would apply to the Indian muslim systems. And as for Gandhiji, he freely acknowledged his debt to Ruskin, Thoreau and Tolstoy. Further, what about science? It is universal because it is a method and a compendium of objective truths brought under various unifying principles. Surely an Indian would not be expected to spurn the law of gravity because Newton was an Englishman who sat under an apple tree some centuries ago! Marxism-Leninism is the science of the development of nature and society in their generalised aspect. But it is also the science of political action, generalising the laws of class struggle in the whole period of transition from capitalism to communism on a world scale. As a science it develops constantly, modifying or rejecting old formulations and adding fresh ones. And as a science its method as also its generalised conclusions have to be applied concretely to a concrete situation. One is quite at liberty to attempt to dispute some or all the formulations of Marxism. One is also certainly within one's rights to criticise the policies and actions of the communist movement. This is relevant and rational. But to go into the nationality of the founders of Marxism-Leninism, to reject their teachings on the ground that they are foreigners is irrational and irrelevant.

In any evaluation of the role played by the communist movement in the first stage of the Indian revolution due credit will have to be given to it for its programmatic efforts. It should not be forgotten that it was the CPI as far back as its manifesto to the Ahmedabad congress in 1921, and completely consistently since then, that advocated complete independence from British imperialist rule as the goal of the freedom struggle. Gandhiji vehemently opposed this demand and only under the pressure of the communists and the left nationalists was the Congress committed to this objective at the end of 1927. The linking of the anti- imperialist and anti- feudal tasks of the freedom struggle and the slogan of "Land to the tiller!" is also the contribution of communists. It is only natural, moreover, that the nationalisation of the mineral wealth as well as key industries in India was advocated by the communists many years before the Congress planning committee moved for its partial acceptance. The international linkages of the freedom struggle of the Indian people were first comprehensively understood and explained by the communists, many years before Jawaharlal Nehru moved in this direction. Not only was this a matter of making clear to the Indian people the place of their struggle in the worldwide anti-imperialist front. It was also a matter of explaining to the workers and other socialist forces in the imperialist countries the significance of India's struggle for freedom. The central place of the Soviet Union in world history and its meaning for our own freedom struggle was also first recognised and popularised by the CPI.

Here recognition and gratitude has to go out to the world communist movement and in particular to the Communist Party of Great Britain. It is not only a question of some selfless

persons coming to India to work shoulder to shoulder against his Britannic majesty's rule. It is much more the question of persisting over decades in supporting India's right to be free in the very centre of British imperialism, facing all the repression and chauvinism let loose against them. The inculcation of scientific socialist consciousness among the vanguard of the working class and the radical intelligentsia at a time when the very word 'socialism' was scarcely known is also one of the most signal services rendered by the communist movement to the shaping of the very mind of India. Finally mention has to be made of the model of self-sacrifice and daring that the communists presented, particularly to the youth. Whether it be in terms of going fearlessly to jail, undergoing the hazards of underground life or facing bullets and lathis, the communists presented the picture of a new type of man, lit up by the fire of a great ideal. And the spirit of comradeship and solidarity that distinguished the communists attracted to them the best representatives of toiling and militant India. These word$_s$ are not put in only for the sake of form but to set the historical record straight and to issue a challenge to any other organised political group in India to show a better record.

Despite all this the communists remained a relatively small force at the end of the freedom struggle, at the conclusion and climax of the first stage of the Indian revolution. What are the reasons for this phenomenon? There seem to be both objective and subjective reasons.

First of all, one has to bear in mind the respective power of the contending anti-imperialist classes. India was not China. The capitalist class in India was not only far more developed than its Chinese counterpart, it had also acquired an industrial base of far greater strength than any other capitalist class of a colonial or semi- colonial country. Similarly the petty bourgeoisiein the urban and rural areas, particularly the stratum of the intelligentsia, had a tar higher degree of articulation and experience than its counterparts in other countries dominated by imperialism (one is writing here without knowledge of countries in Latin America like Mexico, Chile and Brazil, where perhaps conditions might have approximated those in India more closely). The Indian working class of course was also more numerous than in other colonial and semi- colonial countries. But it existed in a few industrial islands in the vast ocean of rural India, whereas the capitalist class and the petty bourgeoisie was everywhere. The Indian working class stood midway between the positions occupied by the Russian and Chinese workers, both of whom were comparatively speaking more powerful *vis-a-vis* their capitalists, though the latter was minuscule compared to the peasantry (which explains partly at least the extraordinary aberrations alter the victory of the revolution in China). If Russia had the 'advantage' of medium capitalist development, China had that of no real development. India fell between two stools.

Secondly, the communists in India were subjected to persecution by the imperialists as no other organised political group in the country. It is of course true that the communists in China suffered even heavier persecution. But it is also true that the Congress leaders, for example, while also suffering persecution were given far greater opportunities to go to the masse$_s$ with their message than were the dissident kuomintangites or other parties like the Democratic League etc. in China. Relatively speaking therefore the communists in India were at a disadvantage compared to their Chinese counterparts *vis-a-vis* the other contending anti-imperialist classes and strata. The British imperialists were not only the most farsighted in the world, but they had in India a developing capitalist class as well as widespread intelligentsia whom they both oppressed but with whom they had some chance of coming to terms, after having to effect a strategic retreat in face of the anti-imperialist mass revolt. Incidentally this factor should be borne in mind by some revolutionary but inexperienced young men who imagine that to be persecuted is always and everywhere an advantage.

Thirdly, there was the factor of the errors on the part of the communists. Contrary both to popular misconception, as well as to certain mechanical interpretations of the Marxist view of history, communists do not hold to the belief that all that happened in history was inevitable. There is an element of determinism in Marxism but this is at the macro level or the level of broad trends. Due to the inevitable contradiction between the relations of production of a given social formation and the development of the productive forces (which includes man with his production experience as its most important component), social revolutions push society in the direction demanded by the development of the productive forces. This process which is of an objective character is retracted through the consciousness of classes and brought to its conclusion through the struggle of classes, at least as far as societies based on class antagonism are concerned. But this refraction is neither automatic nor predetermined as far as its timing is concerned. Here the subjective factor, the role of chance and accident, is accorded its due place in the Marxist view of history. After all it is not for nothing that the Marxist view of historical development is called historical *materialism* and not historical *determinism.* It is not for nothing either that Lenin criticised Bukharin for not having understood dialectics properly and Gramsci criticised him for a mechanical approach, for it is Bukharin who came closest to equating Marxism with historical determinism.

The errors of the communist movement in India were fundamentally four (and it has to be said that the approach of the Communist International as set out for example in the theses of the sixth congress in 1928 helped the committing of these errors. The approach of the second and fourth congresses of the Comintern, held while Lenin was alive, was different and more correct).

The first error was the failure to appreciate the dual character of the Indian capitalist class. The proneness to compromise with imperialism on the part of this class, manifested in the manner in which the mass movement could be called off on all sorts of pretexts, was equated with the going over of this class to imperialism and becoming a part of the counterrevolutionary camp. An alternative explanation sometimes advanced was that the capitalist class merely balanced between the imperialists and the anti-imperialist forces, inevitably going over to the former as social contradictions sharpened. Yet another explanation was that the national bourgeoisie had split into reformist and counterrevolutionary sections, with the former also on the way to joining the latter. The correct position, as subsequently confirmed by history, is that in India the entire bourgeoisie remained in the anti-imperialist camp but played a special dual role within it. This analysis was only made by the CPI as late as 1956 in the Palghat congress resolutions and in the theoretical writings of its then general secretary Ajoy Ghosh.

The second error was the failure to understand the character of the intermediate classes and strata and the restriction of vision to only the capitalist class and the working class in the anti-imperialist forces, in so far as the capitalist class was at all recognised as being part of such forces. The role of Gandhiji, and later of Pandit Nehru, Subhas Bose, the CSP, etc. was not properly grasped as the class analysis used was too bipolar. Here again it should be noted that Mao Tse-tung recognised the special place of these classes in the anti-imperialist, anti- feudal united front, though in his view in the specific conditions of China these classes did not develop a political party of their own. In India these classes developed a definite trend inside the Congress and later even an organised party within the Congress, with a section outside it as well. There is no doubt that the representatives of these classes did display considerable vacillation, sections of them did at a certain stage develop anticommunist and anti-Soviet traits while some sought the help of the fascists during the height of the second world war. Nevertheless the CPI did not function

towards the representatives of these classes in the way it would have, had it the knowledge and mastery of Marxism-Leninism that it now has.

The third error was a wrong understanding of the concept of proletarian hegemony in the anti-imperialist, anti- feudal revolution. Incidentally it is of some interest to note that in Lenin's theses on the colonial question this concept was not advanced at all, least of all as a prerequisite for the building of the anti-imperialist, anti- feudal front and for the success of the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal revolution. And Lenin, it will be conceded, was not 'forgetful' when it came to such matters. He was of course absolutely insistent that the communist parties must preserve their ideological and organisational independence. One notes that this was the position also taken by the fourth congress of the Communist International (December 1922), which .advanced the slogan of the united anti-imperialist front. It is still more interesting to note that the brief outline history of the Communist International prepared by the Institute of Marxism-Leninism of the central committee of the CPSU in 1969 mentions that in the first half of the twenties, the Comintern considered it premature to advance as a direct task the winning of hegemony by the proletariat and the advent of communists to leadership in the national-liberation movement. This was because of its correct analysis that the working class in the colonies and semi- colonies was in the process of crystallisation and the communist parties were merely taking their first steps. These conditions certainly did not change within the next five years or so to warrant the advancing of proletarian hegemony as the essential next step forward for the anti-imperialist, anti- feudal revolution to achieve which was termed the central strategic task by the 1928 sixth congress of the Comintern.

In any event all this discussion is not to question the desirability of proletarian hegemony. Nor is it to question the undoubted fact that an anti-imperialist,-anti- feudal revolution under proletarian hegemony not only takes that revolution to completion but places it firmly on the transition to socialism. What is in question are two points: is proletarian hegemony absolutely essential for the formation of the anti-imperialist, anti- feudal united front in all countries and at all times? Is an answer in the negative to this question necessarily repudiation of Leninism and degeneration into revisionism? Facts and formulations answer both points in the negative.

This theoretical formulation apart, the CPI's approach to the attainment of proletarian hegemony was faulty. Here again an outstanding study in contrast is provided by the functioning of the Chinese Communist Party under the leadership of Mao Tse-tung. To win hegemony and remove the national bourgeoisie *(or* a combination of the national bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie) from the leadership of the anti-imperialist, anti- feudal front, it was essential that the CPI be able to move the working class into independent and pioneering anti-imperialist, anti- feudal actions. It was essential for the CPI to emerge as the builder of the worker-peasant alliance on the basis of an anti-imperialist, anti- feudal platform. The working class as a class had to play the role of leader, headed by its vanguard, the Communist Party. And this class could act as the leader only if it appeared before the masses as the most militant and effective fighter against imperialism. And one of the most important ways it could demonstrate this was precisely to build the broadest possible anti-imperialist, anti- feudal unity. It is not by sectarianism that proletarian hegemony is established. Nor can it be established at one jump. It is built up step by step and by stages.

Unfortunately the CPI worked in the reverse order. It first sought to discredit and dislodge Gandhiji as the chief obstacle to anti-imperialist action. Then in order to effectively discredit and dislodge Gandhiji it decided that the ‘left manoeuvre’ of Nehru and Subhas Bose had first to be rebutted. And in order to accomplish this the 'conciliators and revisionists' in the CPI had to be parted company with. So splitting the CPI was the first job in order to establish

proletarian hegemony! This unfortunately is not a caricature but exactly how a powerful group in the CPI actually functioned in the early 1930s— the group led by the redoubtable B. T. Ranadive. But leaving out the splitting of the CPI, the general line of the communist movement in India on the question of proletarian hegemony was more' or less what has been described above. Not that there was no-opposition to this line. Nor that there were no periods in the history of the CPI when it functioned otherwise. But this strategic misconception was not cleared up till after the 1956 twentieth congress of the CPSU. Of course in this way proletarian hegemony was not established and actually it was the Gandhian leadership and Nehru and Subhas Bose who were regarded by the people as their leaders in the anti-imperialist struggle. It is of contemporary relevance to note the exact opposite mode of action adopted by Mao Tse- tung during the period of the national war against Japanese aggression on China (1933-45). It was Mao who not only had Chiang Kai-shek released following the famous Sian incident in 1936—the same Chiang Kai-shek who had done nothing else but concentrate on fighting and slaughtering the Chinese communists since 1927. H_e went further and agreed to establish a united front with Chiang, even to formally accept his leadership—though always insisting on the independence and autonomy of the Communist Party in the united front, but not demanding the leading position. And it was the Chinese Communist Party and the armies led by it that came forward as the finest, most effective and most self- sacrificing fighters against the Japanese imperialists. It was the CPC that emerged as the most ardent champion of the broadest possible anti-Japanese unity. And the result was that it was the CPC that came to be recognised by ever wider sections of the people as their leader. It was through such superb tactics that Mao Tse- tung led his party to achieve the hegemony over China. And what a tragedy it is that this most outstanding achievement of Mao finds no place in the Red Book of the red guards of the great proletarian Cultural Revolution!

The fourth mistake of which very brief mention needs to be made is with regard to forms of struggle. This of course was a mistake the communists shared with the anarchist revolutionaries. They regarded satyagraha, hartals, fasts and the like as ipso facto reformist or even antirevolutionary. Instead of attempting to infuse a different content and new significance to such forms which had become quite popular among the masses, they tended to decry all struggles in which such forms of action were used. The controversy was not between violence and nonviolence since, as has been pointed out above, many Congress leaders themselves did not hold to nonviolence as a creed, to say nothing of the masses. Nor can it be denied that there was an effort on the part of the leadership to use these forms of struggle in order to control and restrict the upsurge of the masses. But for this these forms were not to be blamed! It is quite significant that in the post- independence period, the communists have been, able to make quite effective use of these forms of action, combined them with the traditional forms of working-class action and contributed to the world treasury of forms of struggle- the bandh.

It is a common enough slander against the CPI that it was not a patriotic force, that it did not participate in the freedom struggle and that it made no contribution to India's freedom struggle.

The document *Communist Party of India: Fifty fears of Struggle and Advance* (1925-1975) adopted by the central executive committee of the national council of the CPI points out: 'The communist pioneers in our country as individuals and as groups had from the outset raised the banner of national-revolutionary overthrow of British imperialist rule in India. It was they who as early as the 1921 Ahmedabad session of the Indian National Congress in a special manifesto urged the freedom movement to inscribe on its banner the demand for complete independence. It was the communists who were the first to raise this demand. Rejected at that time, the representatives of the CPI had gone on propagating and mobilising for this demand. And in 1927 at

the Madras session of the Congress, thanks to their efforts which were powerfully reinforced by Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Bose, this was accepted and from 1930 onwards became the battle cry of the entire nation.

It was the CPI which from the outset did pioneering work to popularise the ideas of scientific socialism and made the first efforts to apply them to Indian conditions and problems. The goal of socialism tor the nation put forward first by it found increasing acceptance among the radical sections of the Congress, preeminent among whom was Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. It attracted ardent spirits among the national-revolutionaries like the immortal Bhagat Singh who renamed his organisation the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association and most of whose closest associates later joined our party. Youthful revolutionaries as well as the veterans of the national-revolutionary current in Bengal, Punjab, UP, in the cellular jails of the Andamans and elsewhere responded to the call and the work of the CPI.

As the party of the working class of our country, as the party dedicated to complete national and social liberation of our people, to the emancipation of the peasantry and all toilers, as the party whose historic mission as the vanguard of the working class was to unite all patriotic and democratic forces, the CPI was the first to come forward with a comprehensive programme of the anti-imperialist and anti- feudal democratic revolution. The pioneers of the communist movement as early as the 1923 Gaya session of the Congress had advanced the basic ideas of such a programme. This attained even clearer shape in the programme of the All India Workers' and Peasants' Party adopted at its first national conference in 1928. It was again put forward in a trenchant form by the CPI at the time of the famous Meerut conspiracy case (1929-31).

"Land to the tiller! Nationalisation of foreign imperialist capital! Adult suffrage! The nation's wealth in the nation's hands! 8-hour working day! Democratic rights of organisation, meeting, demonstration and strike! Social equality for women! Social justice for the untouchables!" —these and other demands which were destined to become national demands first resounded from the ranks of the CPI and the AIWPP which it had established. It was the great demonstration organised by the AIWPP at the time of the 1928 Calcutta session of the Congress which first brought this programme of demands to the attention of the leaders, activists and supporters of this premier national anti-imperialist organisation. It was also at this demonstration that the slogan *Inqilab Zindabadl* was raised by the masses for the first time—later to become the rallying call of resurgent India. And it was from its 1931 Karachi session that step by step and not without delays and detours that important elements of this programme were taken up by the Congress. "The CPI from the outset was the organiser and leader of mighty mass struggles of the workers, peasants and students. It was the builder of the mass, militant organisations of these toiling and democratic sections of our people. The 1928 strike of the textile workers in Bombay led by the new legendary Girni Kamgar Union; the strike of the jute workers of Calcutta, of the railway and plantation workers; of the textile workers in Kanpur, Madurai, Coimbatore; the heroic uprising of the people of Sholapur in 1930; the antiwar strike and demonstration in Bombay in 1939- in thousands of national and class battles of the great Indian working class the CPI was in the forefront. This was its position also in the mighty anti- feudal actions of the peasant and the sweeping all-India anti-imperialist movements of the students.

The CPI leaders and cadres took upon themselves the task of building up the AITUC and from the middle of the 1930s made it the premier united mass organisation of the Indian working class tor close to two decades. It was they who, along with revolutionary-democratic personalities

like Swami Sahajanand Saraswati, founded the All India Kisan Sabha in 1936 which has remained the most important class organisation of India's vast peasantry. It was they who, along with other representatives of militant anti-imperialists of the Congress, founded the All India Students' Federation in 1936 which emerged as the foremost champion and leader of the students throughout the country.

The CPI was second to none in taking up the cause of the unity of the motherland, of all the communities, nationalities, minorities and tribes inhabiting our vast and diverse country. It came forward as the builder of hindu- muslim unity as the selfless fighter against communalism and riots and for the defence of the just rights of the muslims and other minorities and for drawing them fully into the united mainstream of the national struggle. It fought for justice to and protection of the specific identity of the tribal peoples while working to integrate them more completely into the fabric of our national life on a democratic basis.

Though with some mistakes and deviations, from 1942 onwards it advanced a scientific programme for the reinforcement of national anti-imperialist unity through the democratic development of the linguistic nationalities of our- country in the context of the deeper penetration of and ever-greater mass participation in the freedom movement of all our peoples.

The CPI was the developer of a new popular, progressive anti-imperialist and antifascist democratic culture. In 1936 it took the most prominent part in building the Progressive Writers' Association with which were associated such giants of Indian culture as Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore, Premchand, Josh Malihabadi and Vallathol. A whole new current of Indian writing came into being and talented writers in all our languages were deeply influenced by it. In 1942 another big step forward was taken with the formation of the Indian People's Theatre Association which was a landmark in the development of. Our great national culture. Revolutionary songs, plays, ballets, revival of folk forms of art, all enabled the IPTA to bring the people to culture and culture to the people. Revolutionary journalism, especially in our national languages, and the publication of the classical writings of Marxism-Leninism and other outstanding works by the People's Publishing House and sister concerns from the early 1940s onwards were also among the contributions made by the CPI to the cause of national regeneration of our oppressed people.

The CPI was preeminent among the forces which built up the progressive international outlook and links of our freedom struggle on the basis of worldwide anti-imperialist solidarity. It popularised the consistent support extended to our freedom struggle by the world communist movement, the CPSU and the entire Soviet people as well as the Communist Party of Great Britain which fought our national enemy in its very homeland. Consistently propagating for Indo- Soviet friendship it took the lead in establishing the Friends of the Soviet Union organisation in 1942-43 together with prominent Congress leaders and cultural figures. It proclaimed the solidarity of our freedom-fighting people with those of China, Burma, Ceylon, Arab countries and all over the world.

When fascist Germany launched its war of aggression against the Soviet Union in June 1941, the CPI, braving all odds and misunderstanding, boldly came forward with the correct appraisal of the turn as an antifascist people's war in 1942 and pointed out how for its advance and success India's struggle for freedom *had* to be integrated with the worldwide battle against fascism in which the Soviet Union was playing the decisive and leading role. It campaigned for national unity, for national defence and a national government so that our people could simultaneously advance the cause of their own national liberation and that of the entire world battle against the most vicious imperialists—the fascist powers—who were threatening the entire world with the dark prospect of the worst and most barbarous slavery.

Basing itself on the firm foundation of anti-imperialist patriotism and proletarian internationalism, coming out sharply against British imperialist repression, advancing a platform for national unity and a new phase of the freedom struggle, the CPI was not afraid of temporarily going against the current and won the love and respect of lakhs of people by its steadfastness and by its style of selfless service to the suffering people in diverse forms at the grassroots. No doubt there were mistakes in the tactical implementation of the correct general line of the antifascist people's war, in misunderstanding the patriotic motives of many of those who disagreed with its line and took another path like Netaji Subhas Bose and many of the participants in the Quit India upsurge of 1942, in not adopting a more flexible approach to mass struggles once the turning point in the antifascist war had been reached. But the CPI is proud that it correctly understood the significance of the worldwide antifascist war and of the glorious role in it of the Soviet Union for our freedom struggle and for the national-liberation anti- imperialist struggle on a world scale.

The CPI has an unparalleled record of struggle and sacrifice in lighting against British imperialism and in building the unity of all patriotic forces against it. It was the special target of attack by the British imperialists. The Peshawar (1922), Kanpur (1924) conspiracy cases and the historic Meerut conspiracy case (1929-31) are landmarks in our people's battle for freedom and shining examples not only of the patriotism of the CPI but of its great capacity to indict imperialism from the dock. For the first seventeen years of its existence it had to function from the underground and develop the techniques of forms of illegal struggle requiring skill, courage and total dedication. A heavy toll was taken by the British imperialists. So many comrades made the supreme sacrifice, others spent long years in jail and prison camps and still others abandoned their homes and families to live the proud lives of professional revolutionaries having nothing else but their faith, their courage and the love of the masses.

Along with heroism the CPI displayed deep wisdom in fighting for anti-imperialist unity. No doubt it committed significant errors in the period 1929-34. But it began the process of correction in 1934 and with the inspiration of the historic seventh congress of the Communist International (1935) and its general line of antifascist and anti-imperialist unity, the CPI again took up with redoubled zeal the task of building a broad platform of anti-imperialist struggle with work along with and inside the Congress as the core. As in the early days and up to 1929 not only did the CPI approach the Congress, its leaders, activists and masses in a spirit of warm anti-imperialist fraternity but many of its leaders were elected to the AICC.

Particularly close were the bonds with the radical left wing of the Congress represented by Jawaharlal Nehru, Subhas Chandra Bose, Acharya Narendra Deva and others. Together they fought to turn the Congress in a radical direction, to make it the organ of the united front against imperialism by the collective affiliation to it of the mass organisations of the working, people like the trade unions and kisan sabhas. Together they marched in battle against the hated foreign oppressors and for a new, tree India shaping its own destiny. Those were days of comradeship of congressmen, communists and all other patriots in the fire and storm of national awakening and assertion against national humiliation and exploitation.

Though not without mistakes, the CPI adopted towards the Congress the approach of joint fight against imperialism combined with criticism and struggle against the class limitations of dominant trends in its leadership which led to compromises with the enemy, put a break on mass revolutionary struggle and failed to bring into being in its full dimensions the needed national unity. Cooperating with the Congress on the basis of this Leninist line of unity and struggle, the CPI, fighting against both right-reformism and "left"-sectarianism, developed its own proud independent mass base, especially among the workers and toiling peasants.

The CPI forged close links with the heroic representatives of the national- revolutionary trend with whose method of struggle it did not agree. Making frank and fraternal criticism of this outlook and method, the CPI warmly appreciated the militant anti-imperialism of the heroes of Bhagat Singh's Hindustan Socialist Republican Association, of the Ghadar Party, of the Chittagong armoury raiders, of so many others with whom it came in touch in the underground, imperialist courts, Andaman jail, Deoli camp and elsewhere. Many among these heroes later joined the CPI and became some of its most prominent leaders. Following the defeat of the bid for world domination by the fascist powers, in the bringing about of which the glorious Soviet Union made the greatest sacrifices and played the leading and decisive role, a gigantic postwar revolutionary upsurge swept across the globe. Our country and our people also moved forward to the final and decisive confrontation with British imperialism.

Unprecedented mass demonstrations and upheavals shook the country taking the form of solidarity actions with the soldiers and officers of the Indian National Army founded by Netaji Subhas Bose. Workers, students, youth, all patriots and democrats moved massively in Calcutta, Bombay, Madras, Delhi, Karachi, in every part of the country. Despite its differences with the policy of Netaji Bose, the CPI threw itself into this tremendous anti-imperialist upsurge with all the strength that it possessed. Vietnam Day was celebrated for the first time in our country in 1945.

The anti-imperialist tidal wave had its impact on the armed forces resulting in the strike of the men of the Royal Indian Air Force and in the historic uprising of the men and Indian officers of the Royal Indian Navy in 1946. The armed forces of British imperialism began to turn against the foreign oppressors of our people in a manner unparalleled since the great revolt of 1857. Men of the Royal Indian Air Force and of the army began to express their anti-imperialist solidarity with their struggling people. The police force in many places joined the anti-imperialist forces taking up the weapon of strike struggle. Alone among the anti-imperialist parties and forces, even when the tallest of the Congress leaders either opposed these actions or hesitated, the CPI boldly swung into action and appealed for solidarity strikes, demonstrations and other forms of militant actions. Above all the great working class of Bombay along with the students, urban poor and all other militant patriots and democrats came out on the streets and shed their blood for the valiant sailors and other members of the armed forces who had shaken off the chains of slavery and pledged themselves to the nation.

Along with this, the CPI with revolutionary zeal played the leading role in the tremendous upsurge of working class general strike in industry after industry and town after town, above all the great all-India strike of the postal workers and employees.

It played the leading role in the magnificent peasant actions for their just rights, land and against British imperialism, of which the great tebhaga struggle in Bengal in 1946 is an outstanding example.

It played the leading role in the anti-imperialist, anti- feudal actions of the people of the princely states which often took the form of armed struggle and which foiled the British imperialist game of using these states as bases against the freedom upsurge and, if necessary, against independent India. In Dhenkanal-Talcher, in the immortal Punnapra-Vayalar struggle, in the Quit Kashmir movement the CPI spared no sacrifice, and its members, cadres and leaders were right in the front line of tire.

Above all the CPI covered itself with glory in leading the heroic Telangana armed struggle (1946-51) setting a new example of unparalleled mass armed action. Reaching new peaks of

sacrifice and daring the valiant peasants of Telangana, led by their beloved Communist Party, took to arms against the hated autocratic and British toady- the nizam of Hyderabad and his entire system of feudal oppression and national suppression. Some 4000 villages were liberated; ten lakh acres of land distributed to the peasants and a new life blossomed for a people who had taken their destiny into their own hands. Braving the attacks of the razakars and other armed forces of the nizam and subsequently of the Indian army, the peasants of Telangana and their beloved CPI created an imperishable legacy of armed action, victories, courage in setback, fearlessness before death and total dedication to the cause. Thousands of communists, militant peasants, men and women parted with the most precious possession of man—life—for the sake of freedom and at the call of the red flag.

The CPI not only plunged into the stormy sea of the mass revolutionary upheaval but appealed for the unity of all patriotic forces, above all of the hindu and muslim masses. It warned the nation against the devilish British conspiracy to use the weapon of hindu-muslim conflict and riots, to assign the role of traitors to the princely rulers and at the appropriate moment use the brutal force of the British army units then stationed in the country. It sharply criticised the compromises, abandonment of mass actions and exclusive concentration on negotiations indulged in by the Congress leadership. It assailed the manner in which the Muslim League leadership was stoking the lire of communal hatred and playing the game of the British imperialists to drown the mass revolutionary upsurge in the blood of a communal holocaust, partition the country and leave behind two states hostile to each another and pawns in their hands. It appealed for national unity for the final bid for power and for the still bolder unleashing of mass revolutionary struggle.

Despite its best efforts the CPI had neither sufficient independent strength nor adequate links with other anti-imperialist and progressive forces to be able to turn the tide. Power was transferred, the independent states of India and Pakistan were born but the country went through the hell of the unimaginable horror of mass communal carnage just prior to and following the partition of the country.

At this hour of national calamity the CPI joined all other anti- communal forces and spared nothing to put out the flames of fratricidal hatred and killing and to sav$_e$ as many lives as possible as well as the heritage and honour of our nation. When, on 30 January 1948 Mahatma Gandhi fell to the bullet of Godse, a trained assassin of the murderous Rashtriya Swayam-sevak Sangh, spearhead of fascist hindu communalism, the CPI threw all its forces into the battle against this counterrevolutionary monster and was the first to call for its banning. The battle against the forces of Indian counterrevolution, backed by imperialism, had begun. And the CPI, along with other secular, patriotic and democratic forces, sounded the call for action."

Now a brief mention is in order of the anarchist-revolutionary trend of the mid-twenties and middle-thirties. This is a trend associated with the name of Bhagat Singh as well as the Chittagong armoury raid with Surya Sen as its great leader. There was a difference between these later representatives of this trend and their predecessors who we saw were active at the time of Tilak also. They had shed practically all their mysticism. They had accepted socialism as their objective and as is well known Bhagat Singh called his organisation the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association. They had great regard and even reverence for the Soviet Union. They had generally cordial relations with the communists. They viewed their armed actions not as a substitute for mass action but as something that would sooner or later set the masses themselves into action but this time not in the Gandhian forms or under the Gandhian leadership but in genuinely militant and revolutionary forms and under a revolutionary leadership. One is reminded here of Regis Debray with his 'small motor' of armed guerilla action setting in motion

'the big motor' of the mass revolutionary movement. And of course there is more than a family resemblance to the earlier narodniks against whom Lenin polemised. These intrepid spirits disagreed with the communists on two points. One was to whom should the revolutionaries first address their appeal. The communists insisted that it was the working class who should first be aroused and organised; the anarchist-revolutionaries wanted first to concentrate on the young intelligentsia, who were regarded as being less encumbered and entangled with the problems of living and who could therefore be more fearless and revolutionary. The other point of difference was about the "propaganda of the deed", would armed action come at the crest of a mass revolutionary upsurge or vice versa? The two contending sides on this point can easily be identified.

These arguments and conflicting viewpoints were tested by history and the verdict has quite clearly gone in favour of the communists. Not in a general sense either. Many of the finest representatives of the anarchist-revolutionaries, who had time to ponder over their experience in prison and who had the opportunity also to do serious reading, came over to the CPI. One of them, the late Ajoy Ghosh, who was one of the colleagues of Bhagat Singh, became the general secretary of the CPI from 1951 till his death in 1962. The anarchist-revolutionary trend did not survive the 1930s with the communist movement getting into its stride and the Congress as a whole moving somewhat left-of-centre and taking to militant mass action in the 1942 Quit India movement. The ideas of Debray and of the so called naxalites are, one sees, not so very new after all.

Next, again, a brief mention of the left-nationalist trend whose best representatives were Pandit Nehru, Subhas Bose, Narendra Deva and Jayaprakash Narayan of the early period. The Congress Socialist Party and the Foward Bloc represented the organisational consolidation of this trend. This trend arose out of the mainstream of the national movement represented by the Congress led by Gandhiji. But it went beyond this in a radical direction in very many important ways. The features common to this trend were: consistent anti-imperialism; anti- feudalism; acceptance of the socialist economic and social programme, even of the scientific socialist philosophy by a section; willingness to work with the communists, at least till the 1942 movement (though a section of the CSP showed the typical anti-communist attitude of rightwing social-democracy somewhat earlier); generally healthy internationalist approach, including love and admiration for the Soviet Union (even when Subhas Bose went to the nazis and the Japanese he did so only after having attempted to go to the Soviet Union first and to the end he never indulged in any kind of anti- sovietism).

The most outstanding leader of this trend was undoubtedly Jawaharlal Nehru. And it was his position that approximated closest to that of the communists right up to 1942. His writings and speeches helped to mould a whole generation of young patriots, pushing them towards accepting a socialist orientation. He also had the clearest understanding among the left-nationalists of the international linkages of the Indian freedom struggle. It was the efforts of the left-nationalists along with the communists, which pushed the programme and the outlook of the Congress steadily in a left and radical direction. Complete independence; the 1931 Karachi charter; the presidential addresses at Lahore (1929), Lucknow (1936), Faizpur (1937), Haripura (1938); the National Planning Committee and its radical recommendations; the sympathy expressed in official Congress resolutions for antifascist Spain, for victimised Abyssinia and Czechoslovakia, the sending of a Congress medical mission to China which went to Yenan and earned the gratitude of Mao Tse-tung and Chu Teh; the acceptance of the presidentship of the AITUC and sympathy for the AISF. Progressive Writers' Association; the move for collective affiliation of mass organisations to the Congress—these and much else were the work of the

left-nationalists. By any standards this was a revolutionary trend in the general anti-imperialist movement, approximating very closely to the concept of the revolutionary-democrat, advanced by Lenin in his appraisal of the perspectives of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Russia in 1905 and later applied, with necessary modifications to his assessment of the role of Sun Yat-sen. And if Lenin looked upon Gandhi as playing an objectively revolutionary role, one can well imagine the very appreciative appraisal he would have made of the representatives of left-nationalism.

But the tragedy was that the left-nationalists could not unite among themselves. Nowhere was this more graphically illustrated than in the split between Nehru and Subhas Bose in 1939 on the eve of the Tripuri congress. Subhas Bose wrote very caustically of Nehru's propensity for individualistic action, while the latter reciprocated with criticism about the former's inordinate ambition and tendency to opportunism. As a matter of fact it was at this time that Nehru wrote a long essay in which he spelt out his relief that the overwhelming bulk of the Congress was composed of amorphous centrists, that Gandhiji not only represented them but was also essential for any genuinely widespread mass movement that on no account should the left be at loggerheads with him or the centrists, but; their strategy should rather be to pull the centre to the left— possibilities for which existed, especially as far as Gandhiji was concerned. In any event the break between the two most powerful left-nationalist figures was complete. Then again the CSP never got off the ground as Nehru's attitude towards it remained ambivalent to the end. The efforts at left-consolidation proved infructuous, not only because of differences with the communists but also because of mutual recrimination among the noncommunist left.

The left-nationalists, or Indian revolutionary-democrats, had one fatal drawback. The vast bulk of them (except for Subhas Bose in 1940 and thereafter) were not prepared to organise themselves independently of the Gandhi-led Congress. They were not prepared to split and polarise the Congress should matters come to this point. In other words they lacked the courage of the extremists in 1905 and of Gandhiji in the 1920s. It will be remembered that time and again Nehru faced problems with his working committee- C. Bajagopalachari, Sardar Patel and Rajendra Prasad being in the forefront of the right-wing opposition. Each time these were solved at the cost of an increasingly ambiguous consensus, in reality a retreat on the part of the left from the vantage positions it occupied in the Congress from about 1935 to 1940. There is no doubt that a national front of all political parties and forces, all mass organisations as well as prominent individuals was the need of the hour. The Congress did come to embody this national front in the eyes of the people. But there was a time when the united left could have become the Congress or become a powerful organised trend within it or emerged as a powerful organised force seeking a united front with the Congress. After all Subhas Bose's INA was accepted by the masses as part of the national mainstream despite its origins in the expulsion of its founder from the Congress. These are not mere speculations about past history. They have considerable contemporary relevance. The question quite naturally arises as to why the left forces could not unite in the last two decades or so of the first stage of the Indian revolution. Obviously much more than a failure of personalities was involved. It may sound a paradox but it is true that the lesson of these two decades is that if the communists are not right at the centre of the stage battling for left unity, left unity cannot be achieved. Even if they are at the centre of the stage, left unity may not come off. But without them there is no chance of success at all. The communists have been charged with sectarianism. And there is no doubt that on several occasions these charges have had the ring of truth, as the communists themselves have recognised. At the same time it

has to be acknowledged, and this is seldom ever done, that the communists have tried valiantly for unity with others while hardly any others have been nearly so valiant in trying for unity with the communists. And even if we leave the 'unfortunate' communists aside for the moment, it is also a fact that the noncommunist left has engaged itself often enough more in bitter mutual recriminations than in efforts at united action. And most of them have not been able to stabilise their own political formations.

The subjective errors of communist leadership apart, there was an objective basis also for the failure to achieve left unity prior to independence. And this was the relatively weak political weight of the working class. This in turn as we have seen earlier had its causes, both or an objective and subjective nature. It is a fact that the Indian working class went into one magnificent action after another not only for its own economic conditions but also on political issues (e.g. the September 1939 general strike of the Bombay worker$_s$ and earlier the actual capture of Sholapur during the second civil disobedience movement). But its ideological-political intervention was not of the kind that could paralyse the instability and factionalism of the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia—and it is this stratum above all that was represented by the left-nationalists. Nor could it counteract the pull the capitalist class and its representatives exercised over the left-nationalists.

It is quite absurd to postulate that the united left front has to be a front of classes and not political parties. What are political parties but more or less stable formations of the conditions and the interests of different classes? And how do different classes articulate themselves politically except through one or another political party? There is nothing of the Marxist methodology in the contraposing of one against the other. At the same time the vanguard of the working class has, as Lenin repeatedly stressed, to lead the class into independent action. It cannot act on behalf of the class. This is substitution and not leadership. And in the Indian context it can be stated that without such independent action and initiative by the working class the building of left unity will have a precarious base even today.

This of course should not be taken to mean that the communists, as the vanguard of the working class, should first rouse the working class to independent activity and then proceed to its efforts for left- consolidation. Only those with a completely mechanistic outlook can argue or attempt to work in this manner. The two task$_s$ have to be undertaken simultaneously. It is through the efforts at building left unity as an integral part of the broader national front against imperialism in the first stage of the Indian revolution that the vanguard helps the political" growth of its class. Whether it be ideological or political education of the working class, neither can have any impact if it is conducted in the abstract. It has always to be linked to the concrete task the history has placed on the shoulders of the working class at a given stage or phase of the revolutionary process. Certainly the basic components of the Marxist-Leninist methodology and the basic tenets of its system have to be inculcated among the workers but this too has always to be connected with the tasks on hand. The ability of the vanguard to shape the course of events will however depend to a great extent on the degree to which it is able to move its class into action. Such has been the living experience in India and indeed throughout the world.

We would close the review of the first stage of the Indian revolution with an attempt at an analysis of the last phase of struggle which culminated in the transfer of power.

The sweep and militancy of the 1942 struggle, especially in some of the rural areas of UP, Bihar, Bengal and Maharashtra, despite the fact that the Congress high command had allowed itself to be quietly removed to jail and despite the absence of any coordinating centre, showed the new level of consciousness and capacity for organisation of the Indian people's freedom

movement. We are not examining here the correctness or otherwise of launching such a movement at that particular time, nor the calculations of the Congress leadership about the sure success of a short and swift struggle. But the forcible removal of British authority, the establishment of an alternative government and the acts of sabotage with regard to railway lines, telegraph wires and the like, as well as the pitched battles in many of the cities and towns demonstrated a new level of combativeness. The inspiration provided by Subhas Bose and his INA also showed the new mood of the people.

All this was carried much further in the postwar upsurge that swept across India, as part and parcel of the Asian and world resurgence following the defeat of the fascist shock-brigade of world counterrevolution—a defeat moreover in which the peoples of the world clearly saw that the Soviet Union played the major part, and bore the brunt of the losses. The demonstrations in support of the INA detainees—a hindu, a muslim and a sikh—manifested the great unity and militancy of the people. The upsurge in Kashmir, Travancore-Cochin and Hyderabad where the people took to armed action against the feudal servitors of imperialism were part and parcel of this upsurge. The peasant movement of Bengal on the question of sharecropping (the famous tebhaga struggle), the peasant struggles in Bihar and elsewhere were the volcanic rumblings of the aroused Indian village. The innumerable strike actions of the working class and the drawing into such actions of the postal employees, strikes by policemen, sweeping and incessant strike actions by the students—and then the thunder of the guns of the R1N revolt, which had been both preceded by and went on simultaneously with strike actions of the airmen, show--ed that the armed might of imperialism was no longer a monolith. Even more significant was the tremendous response to the call for a general strike given by the CPI over the bead' of the Congress leadership in Bombay as a solidarity action. The fraternity of the striking workers and rebellious sailors had about it the heady whiff of revolution.

Quite clearly a revolutionary situation had come into being. And this had been achieved by a combination of diverse forms of action by different sections of the masses. Though the element of armed action was far more prominent than at any time since 1857, it was not the only nor even the main element. The forms of struggle evolved in the course of the freedom movement, particularly since 1920, were combined with the traditional forms of action by the working class. The people certainly demonstrated that they no longer wished to live in the old way and the imperialists were also unable to rule in the old way.

And yet the first stage of the Indian revolution did not end in complete victory. The imperialists were compelled to give up political power and the Indian capitalist class was able to set up its state-power—certainly a qualitative change and a great advance. But the influence and economic base of imperialism were not removed. The anti- feudal tasks, whether in relation to the princes or the feudal and semi- feudal landlords, were by no means completed. And, it goes without saying; India was not placed on the high road to socialism. The Indian people could only take one step forward when they should have taken two or three.

Here comes the confirmation of Lenin's constant insistence on the essential role of the subjective factor, the role of leadership in a revolutionary situation. A revolutionary situation will not get automatically resolved in favour of the revolutionary forces unless there is a firm revolutionary leadership which is able to unite and hurl into battle all the revolutionary forces. This is precisely what did not happen in 1946-47. It is quite evident from the anguished statements of Gandhiji, the angry reactions of Sardar Patel and the equivocal

attitude of Pandit Nehru, that they had absolutely no desire to head this revolutionary upsurge. They wanted to behead it, to bring down the revolutionary temperature so that delicate negotiations with the British imperialists and the intrigues against the Muslim League (which more than reciprocated) could continue for the security of most- favoured treatment from the imperialists. This was only to be expected from representatives of the national bourgeoisie and the representatives of the peasants and urban petty bourgeoisie who had allied with them. At the decisive hour the latter followed the lead of the former. With such a leadership, the revolutionary masses could not move over to decisive action against the imperialists and feudalists. What however constitutes the real heart of the tragedy is that there was no alternative leadership in whom the aroused people had any faith. The CPI, let be said to its credit, gave the call for the final assault but except in a few centres, it went largely unheeded.

Despite the obvious difference from the mood and temper of the people, it was the compromising leadership that was obeyed, however reluctantly. An important lesson emerges- leadership of the revolutionary upsurge in a revolutionary situation is not won by the issuing of appeals that are revolutionary; it is not won on the spot so to speak. This leadership is won by a correct political line, by the availability of a requisite number of trained cadres and by very widespread links with the masses established over years. A revolutionary victory is never a fluke, it never comes by chance. It requires work, titanic sustained work.

It requires scientific ability to map out strategy and tactical skill to sense and guide the moods of the masses. Nothing is so ridiculous as to brag about hegemony and prattle about everybody else having to accept your leadership if they are to prosper.

A final word about the last phase of the first stage of the Indian revolution. Marx had stated that revolution organises counterrevolution. As the revolutionary upsurge sweeps ahead the forces of counterrevolution also bring in all their reserves, all the vile power at their command. And this is not only a question of using the most ferocious engines of repression. It is after all not the only weapon available to counterrevolution. In India the forces of counterrevolution unleashed the most ghastly communal killings and massacre that this country has ever witnessed. They drowned the revolutionary upsurge in the blood of fratricidal strife. They could not of course have achieved the success they did had not the revolutionary tide ebbed following the betrayal by the traditional national leadership. But they struck with diabolical skill and destroyed not only the unity of the fighting people but of the country itself. Still they did not succeed totally; otherwise they would have managed to keep India in the imperialist orbit as some kind of satellite regime with our independence reduced to a mere fiction. This did not happen.

Thanks to the relatively greater economic strength and political position of the Indian capitalist class (as compared to the position of many other colonial and semi- colonial countries) the greater number and cohesion of the petty bourgeoisie around anti-imperialist positions and finally the undoubted display of the revolutionary temper of the masses, British imperialism had to retreat, pressured as it was by the working class in its own country and taking into account the new balance of forces on a world scale that was already taking shape even in those early postwar years. If the revolution could not succeed in adequate measure, neither could counterrevolution win. A stalemate situation resulted of a kind which in a new form and at an altogether higher level persists even today. The unfinished revolution clamours for completion, even as the forces of counterrevolution prepare to make their bid to pull off a reactionary coup.

5 Perspective of Indian Revolution

It is against the background of this review of the past revolutionary experience of our people in modern times that we can attempt to outline the perspectives of the present stage of the Indian revolution. But in order to be able to do this with any measure of objectivity, we must begin with an effort to try to 'understand the socioeconomic changes that have taken place in India since independence. Naturally any presentation of such a complex problem will tend to be schematic but the presentation might provoke useful discussion.

What are the different relations of production that we encounter in India? What about the development of productive forces? And what is the nature of the mode of production, the base of the entire socio- economic formation of India today? These are vital but difficult questions to answer in any detail. It will however suffice for our purpose if we are able to indicate the broad contours of the socioeconomic scene in India. The main impression emerges of a *dual development* in the economy.

Taking the two decades of independence as a whole, there can be no denying the fact that there has been considerable development of the productive forces, i.e. of the implements of production as well as of man who uses these implements and acquires a fund of production experience in so doing. The development of productive forces is by no means sufficient to solve the problems of development with which India is confronted. Nor does it measure up to the possibilities that are technically existent but which are socially held up. Nevertheless the development of the productive forces is considerable and cannot be gainsaid. As a synthetic indicator (however unsatisfactory since not only material values are taken into account) we have the growth of the net national product by over 75 per cent in the period from 1948 to 1969, with agricultural production having risen by over 50 per cent and industry by over 100 per cent in the same period. This record compares favourably with any other country in the so- called third world (or the zone of newly-independent states) except for those that have advanced on to-socialism. It is true that India started off with an advantage in. that it had a far more developed industrial base and transport network and that it did not go through the kind of war devastation that many other newly-independent states had to cope with. A viable administrative structure was also inherited but this has turned out to be a curse in disguise. But these factors only help to explain the better showing that India has made. They 'do-not do away with the fact of the performance.

Nor are these the only noteworthy features of the development of productive forces in post-independence India. While it is true that national income statistics show that the structure of the economy has not altered much- the share of agriculture in the net domestic product has fluctuated around 48 per cent; of mining, manufacture and transport and communications around 24 per cent; of various types of services, including trade and administration, around 24 per cent. Nevertheless there is no denying the fact that ther$_e$ has been a qualitative change-with regard to the kind of products that are made in India as well as the manner in which they are made. While agriculture has lagged behind and continues to lag behind, despite the hybrid-fertiliser- tractor combination in certain areas, and has yet to make a technological breakthrough, industry has done much better. Plants like the HEC at Ranchi, the MAMC, the-new steel plants, fertiliser plants, oil refineries, heavy electrical plants, aircraft manufacture, HMT wagon-building, the design and consultancy bureaus of HSL and FCI, etc., the petrochemical complexes coming up in different regions—all these demonstrate that if man is a tool-making animal, independent Indian man has made considerable progress and approached the threshold of the modern age. The industrial landscape of India has changed absolutely beyond recognition.

And as has been stressed above it is not only the tools but along with them quite inevitably the toolmaker has also altered' beyond recognition. The industrial worker of contemporary India is very far removed from what his father was. And his numbers have swelled considerably. He has been joined by the fast proliferating white-collar worker whose conditions of work and psychology increasingly approximate that of the industrial worker. A new intelligentsia has come into being, quite 'different from the liberal-professions oriented intelligentsia of the pre- independence days. One sees also the great change in the composition of students. The number of first generation students especially at the middle and high school levels and to a lesser extent in the colleges has vastly increased as has the number of students with a rural background. Their psychology or spiritual makeup is also considerably different. There may be a certain rawness and primitiveness about the majority of them and a greater amount of hardheadedness, and desire for material advancement and an element of careerism—but there are modern drives, different from the hierarchical consciousness of the not so distant past. Anti-imperialism is not so dominant a force as it once used to be but there is patriotism and an urge towards radicalism.

At the same time, as we shall see, the frustrations of the capitalist path and the failure of the left in many parts to project the future with its new, inspiring ideology have led to a growth of revivalism and superstition among the students. With the breakdown of the nationalist ideology and the failure in many places to advance the new democratic ideology, to say nothing of socialist consciousness, pre- nationalist ideologies of caste, religion and regionalism rush in to fill the vacuum. This is not a process confined to the students or the intelligentsia; it is fully present in the working class itself.

But this development has been noted and commented upon and almost made to appear as the only characteristic of the ideological makeup of the new industrial worker, the white-collar worker and the new student. To say the least, this is to overdraw the picture. All this superstition, religiosity and barbarism are not the products of the new in independent India. They are the ideological reflex of the persisting relics of the past. They are reminders that in India today the past is still very present. One has however to note the change as well. Whichever class in Indian society one chooses to take one will have to admit that in the aggregate there is now more of rationalism, more of knowledge, more of an urge for justice and equality, more of a desire for a better material life than in the days before freedom.

The degeneration of the majority of Congress leaders should not be taken as the degeneration of the nation as a whole. Such degeneration could have taken place and might well take place if there is the triumph of counterrevolution. But what has taken place in India since 1947 is not counterrevolution, just as it is not advance in the direction of socialism. What has taken place is development along the capitalist path with compromises with imperialism and feudalism and in an epoch when capitalism is historically obsolescent on a world scale. But capitalist development even of his distorted kind does also inevitably produce its gravedigger- the new productive force of the new Indian working man, emerging from darkness and advancing towards light.

Is this true of the Indian village as well? With the lag in the development of the productive forces of Indian agriculture, as compared to the development that has taken place in the industrial sphere, there has been less of change if we take the Indian countryside as a whole. But uneven 'development, based largely on irrigation facilities and proximity to urban centres, is the very law of motion of the Indian countryside.

However here too what has taken place is neither counterrevolution nor restoration but halting, retarded and very uneven growth. Here too while the forces of medievalism and their ideology has made gains, so have the forces of modernity and the latter more than the former. Feudalism and

semi-feudalism have not been eliminated and the concentration of landownership has not been done away with but they are not as powerful as they once used to be. They have been curbed and partially transformed. And in the village too the agricultural labourer and the poor peasant while still terribly oppressed are by no means as cowed down as before, particularly in areas where either the economic transformation has been swifter or where the democratic movement has had deeper roots— the two do not always coincide. As for taking to new techniques, every available evidence points to the conclusion that the Indian peasant is as responsive to innovation as anybody else. The difficulties are those of a lack of means.

Ono is insisting on all these points and emphasising the change in that of the most important of all productive forces— the working man of India, because this is often overlooked. Often enough in a mechanical materialist manner all attention is focused only on the implements or tools of production. The most rebellious or revolutionary factor in the Indian scene is thus missed and all kinds of pessimistic conclusions drawn, bringing grist to the mill of the forces of Indian counterrevolution. And let it be remembered that it is man who spans the entire length of the socioeconomic formation from the base to the superstructure.

While we have to bear in mind the new in the productive forces of post- independence India, it will be completely one- sided to overlook the old. In this age of scientific technological revolution, the productive forces of India are still woefully underdeveloped and medieval in many respects and in many areas. This is particularly true of rural India and of some of the older established industries.

What are the different relations of production that we encounter in India today and how do they differ from those of the colonial past? There are some problems of methodology to be cleared up here. Imperialism is essentially a particular stage in the development of the capitalist mode of production. The relations of production in the stage of monopoly capital are still the relations of production of capitalism. Greater concentration and centralisation of capital and the greater socialisation of the production process, inherent in the transition from competitive to monopoly capital, do not signify any basic change in the relations of production, in the pattern of ownership, in the private appropriation of the fruits of social production. The development and dominance of monopoly accentuate the conflict between socialised production and private appropriation which is the central contradiction of the capitalist mode of production. This is a tact 'missed' by the theoreticians of 'convergence' of capitalism and socialism, by the theoreticians of the change of capitalism into the corporate industrial state.

In relation to the countries colonised by imperialism the matter is somewhat more complex. Imperialism bolsters up feudal and semi- feudal relations of production. It generally opposes the growth of the indigenous capitalist relations of production, especially in the industrial sphere. It brings in its wake an inevitable expansion of commercial relations and of commodity production but retards and distorts the tendency of such development to culminate in capitalist relations of production based on the productive forces of machinofacture. Imperialism in the colonial countries not only plunders economically, siphoning off the surplus product (surplus above an increasingly precarious subsistence, resulting in calamitous famines and dreadful human mortality), it also exerts all manner of extra- economic coercion to prevent the development of the productive forces of the colonies.

It is therefore a particular type of capitalist relations of production when it comes to the colonial setting. It is this that was the leading relation of production in colonial India. The feudal and semi-feudal relations prevalent in the countryside were of course far more extensive and far weightier quantitatively but they followed in the wake of the capitalist relations of production of the

imperialist type. Petty commodity production, natural economy and indigenous capitalist relations of production were also prevalent in colonial India. The capitalist relations of production of the indigenous variety developed in India largely through the second way of capitalist growth described by Marx (and mentioned above) but it nevertheless came into conflict with the imperialist mode of exploitation no sooner did it start developing the productive forces of India both through greater social division of labour and through a degree of industrialisation.

One can here make a distinction between the imperialist-capitalist relations of production and the indigenous-capitalist relations of production by stating that the former, while extracting surplus-value in the actual cycle of production, depends to a great extent for capital accumulation on profit-on-alienation (i.e. outside the process of production proper) and on extra-economic coercion, and the latter more on extracting surplus-value in the actual cycle of production, though also relying on profit-on alienation and extra- economic coercion. These two variations in the mode of appropriation of the surplus product, though both based on the capitalist relations of production, have quite opposite effects and connections with the development of productive forces, one helping and the other hindering.

In independent India over the past thirty years or so what are the relations of production that have been fostered, what preserved and what reduced in importance, if not removed? There is little doubt that it is the capitalist relations of production of the indigenous type that have grown most rapidly, been deliberately fostered and become the leading element in the total ensemble of the relations of production that make up the totality of the mode of production of independent India.

It is also interesting and of considerable significance that the chief form of this growth has been the development of the public sector in the sphere of industrial production as well as in transport, finance and distribution. State capitalism of this kind is the most progressive form of capitalist development in newly-independent countries and creates the highest degree of socialisation of production as well as the material basis for non- capitalist transformation to socialism. It is also of appreciable progressive significance that the development of the public sector is inextricably linked with the enormous expansion of trade and other economic relations with the socialist countries, above all the Soviet Union. It is connected therefore with the partial but developing linkage of Indian economy with the socialist international division of labour, even though it still remains basically a part of the imperialist: international division of labour.

At the same time it must not be overlooked for a moment that the public sector in India today is neither socialist nor non- capitalist. It is state capitalist. Its mode of financing and accumulation is capitalist, especially the spoliation of the toiling people through taxation and deficit-financing. It runs its concerns mainly in a bureaucratic fashion, animated by the capitalist contempt and dislike for the actual producer of values. Its construction assists the capitalist class as a whole to make considerable windfall profits at the expense of the national exchequer. Its products, thanks to the capitalist pricing policy, also aid the growth of the capitalist class as a whole, including the stratum of monopolists. Thus while the development of the public sector helps the nation, it particularly benefits the capitalist class.

State capitalism however is not the only form in which indigenous capitalist relations of production have been fostered and developed in India. There has been ample encouragement to and growth of private capitalism, in the first place of the stratum of monopolists.

The 75 monopoly houses controlled by some fifteen or twenty monopoly families have developed their assets at quite a phenomenal pace. The facts are far too well known to need much emphasis

here. What we would like to emphasise here are only four facets of this process of the development of the monopoly stratum of the Indian capitalist class.

There is no doubt that this stratum developed without Indian capitalism having gone through all the phases of capitalism, including the phases when capitalism played so progressive a part in the general forward movement of history. A powerful section of the Indian capitalist class went straight, as it were, from pre- capitalist childhood to a kind of decadent senility, having a very brief period of invigorating manhood. Nevertheless, even as we remember the many pre-capitalist and commercial capitalist features and motivations of the Indian monopolists, it cannot be forgotten, least of all by those who claim to be following the methodology of Marx, that their emergence does testify to the development of capitalist relations of production, and fairly considerable development at that. The emergence of the monopoly stratum in the Indian capitalist class cannot be treated as evidence of 'pre- capitalist throwback'. It is living testimony to the fact that India has advanced along the capitalist path of development, however much that phrase might rankle in the ear$_s$ of some. Som$_e$ of the critics of the CPI's thesis of the present crisis in India being the crisis of the capitalist path of development bas$_e$ themselves on the famous distinction that Marx makes in *Capital* (third volume) on the two ways of capitalist development. These critics make one fundamental mistake—they overlook the fact that Marx terms both ways as ways of capitalist development. He does not characterise the non-revolutionary way as merely the way of pre- capitalist throwback and restoration.

The second facet to which we would like to draw attention is the comparative size of the monopolist stratum. It is of course utterly puny as compared to the monopoly giants of the developed capitalist or imperialist countries. General Motors or Standard Oil of New Jersey would feel somewhat insulted if they were to be bracketed together with the Tatas and Birlas as all being members of the club of monopolists. Nor is this all. If we compare the relative position occupied by the giant western monopolies in their national economies with the position of the Indian monopoly houses in Indian economy, we shall find that the latter is not in the same position at all as that of the former. Whether we take the standards of capital assets, financial power, workers employed, values produced, commodities controlled as well as chain of control through intermediaries, we shall find that the Indian monopolists do not anywhere occupy the same dominant position as do their counterparts in the imperialist countries. Moreover in India the state capitalist sector did not emerge as the result of private monopoly capitalist development, crowning the process with the coming into being of state monopoly capitalism. State capitalism in India, whether in the fields of transport, power industry, trade or banking, grew *pari passu* with the emergence of the Indian monopolist stratum, assisting it as well as restricting it, collaborating with it as well as curbing and competing with it.

Today the position has been reached when the Indian public sector, or Indian state capitalism, is more powerful than Indian monopolist stratum in practically every sphere of economic enterprise. The public sector has hitherto not been used to any great extent as an antimonopoly force. This is only natural considering the powerful influence wielded by the monopolists in the Indian state, of which it is a component part. But not only is its antimonopoly potential enormous but it provides a material-technical base for our country's economic development obviating and cutting of the full fledged monopoly stage of Indian capitalism. It would certainly be the height of folly to minimise in the least the power of the Indian monopoly stratum or its potential as a counterrevolutionary force, especially in collaboration with the imperialists and the feudal and semi- feudal and landlord forces in the rural areas. And the political pull, patronage and penetration of the Indian monopolists are considerably greater than is warranted by the extent

of their economic position, because of the class character and outlook of the top echelons of the bureaucracy as well as of powerful segments of the highest leadership of the ruling party whether in the organisation or in the government.

The split in the Congress has certainly reduced this power in the ruling Congress but this power is still considerable in these spheres as well, to say nothing of its force in the rightist consolidation of the Syndicate, Swatantra and Jana Sangh and the entire force of counterrevolution. At the same time one must guard against overdrawing the picture as some Marxist analysts tend to do. They schematically argue that since a monopolist stratum has emerged in India and since the monopolies are the leading and dominant force in the states of the imperialist countries, hence in India too this stratum 'must' be dominating and leading the Indian state. They put forward such a formation as an axiomatic assertion without attempting an all-sided and comprehensive analysis of the actual position in India. They therefore violate the very first principle of Marxist methodology, i.e. that truth is always concrete.

The third facet of the process of the emergence of the Indian monopoly stratum to which we would like to draw attention is the fact that neither this process nor the formation and growth of the public sector exhaust the story of the development of Indian capitalism in the industrial sphere. It is not only the reactionary way of capitalist development that has been the way along which the Indian capitalist class has developed. The "really revolutionary" way, as Marx put it, has also been the way along which a section of the Indian capitalist class has developed. In the medium and small capitalist sector, innumerable examples can be found of the growth of capitalist entrepreneurs from among the petty commodity producers, from the new-skilled intelligentsia, from even a small section of skilled workers. Even more numerous are examples of capitalists, who may not have 'directly emerged from the ranks of the petty commodity producers and through the process of their differentiation, but who do take an active part in the organisation and development of their enterprises, playing the same role as their counterparts in the mid-nineteenth century, or even earlier, capitalist industrial breakthrough in Great Britain. These medium and small capitalists are by no means a negligible force, whether we take the national economy as a whole or the Indian capitalist class.

The monopolies commission report as well as the annual surveys of Indian industry would show that taken as a group their capital assets as well as production of values compare quite favourably *vis-a-vis* the monopolists, though in the "very nature of things they are much more dispersed, do not enjoy the advantages of economies of scale, of distribution apparatus and influence with the government or foreign imperialists. A fact of considerable importance is that the small and medium industrialists, particularly in the Punjab, parts of Maharashtra, 'Gujarat and Tamil Nadu, have proved to be technologically more innovative and enterprising than the large industrial houses. And this stratum has not emerged as a byproduct of monopoly growth or as subsidiaries or mere agencies for the monopoly houses. Its emergence and development has been a process running parallel with that of the monopolies.

There was in this case too collaboration and conflict, coexistence as well as competition. And with the passage of time and in the context of available resources becoming scarce in relation to the increased 'developmental process as well as the insufficient expansion of the national market to absorb the increased capitalist commodity production, these two parallel processes of capitalist development entered into a phase where antagonism is likely to be greater than collaboration.

Besides it is the development of the public sector, i.e. of state capitalism, that helped not only the monopoly houses but also the medium and small industrialists—training, industrial estates,

infrastructure, credit, ancillary production, guaranteed market, etc. It is quite evident that in the last analysis, with the spectacular development in all spheres of national life, this process would proceed faster to the advantage of both state capitalism as well as the medium and small capitalist strata.

The fourth facet of our brief examination of the meaning of the emergence of the monopolist stratum of the Indian capitalist class relates to its conglomerate character. It has been noted by authorities examining recent trends in the development of US monopoly capitalism that the gigantic wave of mergers of already huge monopoly empires has led to the coming under the same roof of totally unrelated production lines, e.g. steel and textiles or telephones and cosmetics. While testifying to the increased socialisation of the production process, it also testifies to its totally irrational character under monopoly capitalism. One finds that the Indian monopoly houses have developed the same characteristic—Birlas have textiles, fertilisers, newspapers, engineering, grape gardens and money lending! And the Birlas are not exceptional but quite typical in this respect. In every respect the Indian monopoly houses have become a counterproductive force in India today. The reports of various commissions with their accounts of outright swindling, preemption, restrictive practices and so on convey this message for all to see. For any Marxist not to grasp this patent fact is a sorry commentary not only on his Marxism but also on his grasp over facts.

A few words have to be said at this stage regarding imperialism and its economic presence in the country after independence. There are any amount of statistics to prove the contention that the capital assets of private foreign capital have increased enormously in value, taken from the angle of absolute growth. And while the UK retains its leading position, it has the US and now West Germany as its competitors. The foreign collaboration agreements, tending to increase dependence on imperialist technology, have also greatly multiplied as compared to the position in pre- independence time. The annual drain in the form of repatriated profits, fees and royalties has also been on the increase and represents a running sore. What is of far greater importance is the enormous expansion and qualitatively different nature of the export of state monopoly capital with the USA in the lead by a huge margin. This has not only led to the present serious debt repayment problems but has created a whole psychology of dependence as brought into prominent relief by the budgetary role played by the PL-480 counterpart funds. Of course the more glaring and disastrous manifestation of this psychology of dependence was the decision to devalue the rupee, not so much on grounds of economic expediency as such but because the expectation was that this would make the imperialists far more generous, especially the US imperialists, since they were insistent about devaluation. The context of the decision, it will be recalled, was provided by the extraordinary performance of Asoka Mehta in the USA on the very eve of the decision. He not only made the utterly obscene speech about the opening womb of India but called upon the hardheaded businessmen from Wall Street to learn the virtues of backseat driving- a more open call to give India some kind of neocolonialist regime could scarcely have been made.

In relative terms however whatever aspect of the matter we consider the position of the imperialists has weakened in the realm of national economy, to say nothing of political sphere, compared to what it was in the first years after independence. It might appear rather ridiculous to have to make this point were it not for the fact that this has become a matter of contention in the Marxist circles and communist movement. While some would state that the present Indian state is a semi- colonial state, some others of the same movement argue that though India did achieve independence in 1947, the economy has become increasingly dependent, year by year, on the imperialists. This is because, according to them, i.e. the CPM, the Indian

state is led by and dominated by the monopolists who are collaborating with the imperialists. The Indian state therefore is led by the collaborationists and the economy is being led by them to increasing dependence.

Neither of these two sections of the communist movement would care to explain how this is so when the relative position of the imperialists has weakened in the present period. While private imperialist capital investment has gone up in absolute terms, its relative position *vis-a-vis* both indigenous private as well as state capitalism has sharply declined. Again, while the foreign trade of India is still mainly with the imperialist countries, the share of the socialist and newly-independent states has gone up considerably over the past two decades. Besides the very development of the economic base of India makes country far less vulnerable to imperialist pressure than it would have been say some 20 years ago. The pressure exerted by the export of state monopoly capital, especially in the form of PL-480 food shipments, is the most ominous and this has intensified over the years. Even in this sphere India's position is far better than it was some two decades ago, especially with the vast increase in aid from the socialist states and the general development of the national economy.

The danger of neocolonialist subversion cannot be fought by drawing a panicky picture of the extent to which imperialism still has powerful positions in our national economy. The danger has to be accurately visualised and properly pinpointed. And it has to be stressed that, considering both the world as well as Indian developments in the past two decades, there is absolutely no objective reason for any kind of capitulatory or weak-kneed attitude to the imperialists.

The danger of neocolonialist subversion or takeover of the Indian economy and state is very real. But this implies that the Indian state and economy today are neither semi- colonial nor neocolonial. It also implies that such a takeover is not inevitable. A danger can be defeated but what is inevitable cannot be warded off! The danger is not that India will be converted into a Taiwan or a Ghana after the downfall of Nkrumah. To guard against such a development would be to miss the real danger and to fail to understand the concrete dialectics of the neocolonialist strategy *vis-a-vis* India. As far as our country is concerned the neocolonialist strategy is to promote a kind of collaborationist capitalism, build a dependent capitalism in alliance with Indian monopoly capitalists. And to push this kind of development through would mean a drastic weakening of the economic relations with the socialist states, a restriction of the position and growth of the public sector, reduction of the plan to a formality and greater reliance on the so- called free play of market forces, reliance on the landlord-capitalist to carry through the so- called 'green revolution' in the countryside.

Quite obviously this would require the dismantling of the, present parliamentary democratic superstructure and its replacement by an authoritarian state. Recent developments have only underlined how real such a danger is- and that there is a very real chance of defeating this danger.

The changes in the Indian countryside have been considerable and complex. Nevertheless the main trends are now fairly clear. The redistribution of land, in terms of the implementation of the slogan "Land to the tiller!", to the landless and the land-poor has not taken place except on a limited scale in the very recent period (and this through the struggle of the peasants as well as agricultural labourers leading to actual forcible occupation of wasteland). The concentration of the ownership of the land is still very high and the inequality of ownership really formidable, with the vast bulk of the rural population practically deprived of the main means of production. The democratic transformation of production relations in the Indian, countryside has yet to take place. Additionally usurious money-lending is still the main form 'of credit, the source being the traditional moneylender as well as the 'agriculturist', i.e. the landlord-moneylender. The bulk of

commodity exchange (vastly increased in the post- independence period so much so that rice and wheat have become some of the principal commercial crops) is controlled by the mill owner, the landlord and the wholesale trader, often the same person but always linked closely. The persistence of semi- feudal relations of production is undoubted and it is this that gives meaning to the formulation that the stage of democratic revolution is not yet over in our country. The material equipment of the overwhelming bulk of Indian agriculture continues to be primitive and meagre, though in certain areas there has been a fair amount of development in recent times—a combination of improved seed, fertiliser, water supply and mechanisation. It would be totally unrealistic and subjective to ignore this aspect of the situation in Indian agriculture.

Nevertheless transformations have been taking place in the Indian countryside in the period since independence. And the clear direction of development is the growth of capitalist relations of production. While it is true that the growth of commodity production by itself does not necessarily lead to the growth of capitalist relations of production, there is a certain point after which quantity turns into quality in this sphere as well. It is not only a question of land having become a commodity on a scale unprecedented not only in Indian history but for any society where semi-feudal relations of production persist. Nor is it only a matter of a tremendous increase in production for the market. It is above all a question of a change in the form of the extraction of surplus from the labourers, the working peasant's included. Exploitation in the form of tenancy continues, so does a particular type of labour rent and rent-in-kind. But this is by no means the only kind of exploitation that now prevails in the Indian countryside. There are two types of capitalist development taking place and at an accelerated pace in the recent period.

It will be remembered that Lenin had distinguished between two kinds of capitalist development in agriculture. One is along the junker path, the painful and the reactionary path of the transformation of feudal and semi- feudal landlordism into capitalist landlordism. This is not only a slow way of development, leaving intact many vestiges of feudalism but also presents a grave menace to the development of productive forces, especially an enlightened and democratic working peasant. The other is along the American way of development, i.e. through a measure of agrarian reform and the rise of capitalist elements from among the petty commodity producers. This is not only a speedier but a more democratic way of development, the best possible way in conditions of the breakthrough from feudalism and semi- feudalism to capitalism, when there is no question of the capitalist alternative.

In India we have had a combination of both types of capitalist development and the result is that we have both feudal and semi- feudal landlords who have transformed themselves into capitalist landlords as well as a stratum of rich peasants who have emerged from the better-oft' sections of the protected tenants and the petty commodity producers in general. There is quite an amount of empirical evidence pointing to this conclusion as well as the evidence of those who have been working for many years on the peasant front.

But some peculiarities of the development of capitalist relations in Indian agriculture have to be noted. There has been no major redistribution of land in favour of the actual cultivators, in particular the toiling and poor peasants. But some land has passed from the hands *of* the landlord class to the rich peasants. The capitalist landlords have of course evicted peasants who were tenants on an extensive scale in the first decade after independence. Some have 'come back' on the basis of oral leases and the like. There has been in some areas an increase in share-cropping as an 'alternative' to the previous tenancy based on cash rent. But most of the land under rich peasant cultivation has come from the landlords who had previously given it on lease—

compensation having been paid on the basis of capitalised rent. There has been in the very recent days some amount of leasing of land by the rich peasants, and even some capitalist landlords, from the poor peasants who have not been able to maintain themselves even at subsistence level on their miserable plots and who have a somewhat better chance of survival as agricultural labourer or by migrating to the towns and construction sites. Extortion has of course accompanied this kind of distress sale.

But there is another phenomenon to be noticed here. In many areas the poor peasants and middle peasants have sold their relatively small plots of wet land and bought much larger plots of dry land (or land where irrigation is expected soon) and then used their superior skill as compared to the local cultivators to transform their new plot$_s$ and themselves into a new type of entrepreneurial capitalist in agriculture or a rich peasant. In some parts of the country, especially in the previously dense forest areas or in the foothills of the northern areas, enterprising farmers from other regions as well as ex-servicemen or a certain kind of educated semi-urban dwellers have brought fresh land under cultivation on which they not only produce crops but also capitalism!

Another fact, noted by many scholars who have engaged in what are called farm management studies, is that in Indian conditions (and it would seem in Japan as well) a small unit of production (of course above a certain level) is not necessarily disadvantageous. As far as productivity per unit of land or labour, or relative capital investment is concerned, the advantage has not gone to the owners of large holdings. The smaller landholders have more than held their own in these respects. Finally it has to be noted that the capitalist development of agriculture in India, as in other spheres, takes place at a rather slow pace and in conditions where there is some amount of democratic consciousness among the middle and poor peasants and some amount of organised peasants as well, though very much less than what is desirable or possible. In these conditions, while eviction and deprivation of land through the process of differentiation has taken place and continues to take place, it is not on the scale that was witnessed in the period of capitalist development in Europe in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

The cumulative result of the impact of all these factors is that in India since independence we have the persistence of a very large section of middle peasants, of petty commodity producers who produce for exchange but without generating sufficient surplus for extended reproduction on a significant scale. There has not been that kind of polarisation produced in the Indian village which a classical type of capitalist development would have resulted in. This naturally has very important consequences for .the development of the revolutionary movement in India.

An interesting development in the recent period is the direct penetration of the industrial monopoly houses, including imperialist concerns, into agriculture. Seed-farms, orchards, vegetable farms, grape gardens, etc. have been the main forms of this penetration up to now. But it is clear from the various proposals being made by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry that there are plans to go further in this direction. Credit and market mechanisms are also partially controlled by the monopolists (at least until the 14 major banks were nationalised) but not wholly, of course. Efforts have been made and will surely continue to be made to build up a durable alliance between the landlords (both of the pre- capitalist and capitalist varieties) and the monopolists, but at the same time there is also increasingly coming into existence an objective basis for a conflict between this alliance and the other elements of capitalism in the rural areas, though points of collaboration also exist.

In other words contradictions develop not only between the forces seeking a non- capitalist path of development but also between different forms and types of capitalist development as well.

Some acute analysts who have been observing developments in the rural areas of India for over a decade have come to the conclusion that a kind of industrial revolution is also taking place in the countryside. This would seem to be an exaggeration but not totally wrong. Agro- industries have begun to spring up on a large scale. Even more important is a very significant growth of what are usually termed subsidiary occupations such as the growing of vegetables, poultry farming and 'dairy farming. What we have here is an important increase in the pace and scope of the further division of labour and the greater connection, on the basis of diversified production as well as increase in consumption, between the rural areas and the urban market. Of course the reverse process is also taking place with the increase in the consumption in the rural areas of articles produced in the towns— not only commodities like cigarettes, soap, matches and cloth but relatively more durable items like cycles, torches, transistors and watches. The urban-village continuum, on the basis of the growth of capitalist relations of production and the market, is developing and consolidating, getting knotted together in the increase of small towns as well as of transport facilities. This again is of extraordinarily great significance for the perspectives of the Indian revolution.

There- are some other aspects of this continuum which need to be briefly mentioned. One is the spread of primary and secondary education to the village, with students drawn not only from the upper strata but also from the middle peasants and even from the poor peasants and agricultural labourers. It is a process whose importance should not be underestimated and whose significance is the strengthening of the trend towards the 'urbanisation' of the Indian village. But this is not the only impact of education and its spread. The number of students going from the villages to the town$_s$ and large cities for the collegiate level of education has shown a qualitative increase in the post- independence years, much more so if we include those who go in for higher school education. It is quite true that the educational opportunities available, especially for the toiling and poor sections of our society are hopelessly inadequate. But at the same time it would be absurd not to notice the great increase that has taken place and the sociological consequences of this not only for the student body as a whole but also for the rural areas from where many of these students now come. Being somewhat of misfits in the urban areas, these first generation students add to the social tensions there, having initially a large Luddite element in their psychological makeup. But these students also bring back a good deal of the town when they return to their village homes, disturbing the atmosphere of "rural idiocy".

Another aspect, but at the level of the poorer toilers, of this spreading and strengthening continuum is the migrant worker— on the dam sites, on the industrial projects, on the urban housing sites, on the cycle rickshaw or on the railway platform as porters —who leaves his family in the village and returns frequently to it. This unskilled and semiskilled partial-worker-partial-peasant has also grown quite enormously in numbers. He more than takes the place of the original industrial worker, including plantation labourer, who also had his one foot in the village but who now tends to be drawn more from the urban area itself. He also quickens life in the village and drags it increasingly in the direction of the capitalist town and all its modern contradictions.

Still another aspect, whose significance is often misunderstood, is the increasing participation of the rural areas in the parliamentary democratic political processes. It is of course of great transformatory significance that the peasant, including the so called lower strata, gets to know that there is such a thing as his right to vote—not only for the panchayat but also for the assembly and even parliament. It should not be forgotten that while adult franchise is not at all the means by which the toiling peasant or any other section of the toiling people for that matter will secure his social and economic emancipation, it is at the same time an important democratic right. It was and is an important component of the programme of the democratic revolution in all countries. It is precisely

for this reason that the entrenched vested interests 'do all in their power to negate the power of this democratic right. They not only resort to outright violence and terror; they not only use bribery on a vast scale, they also bring into play all their social power and utilise all the pervasive influence of the pre- capitalist ideologies such as caste, religion and the like. It has been correctly noted by Jayaprakash Narayan that the largest political party in the country is caste. It is also true that caste feelings and alliances have come much more to the forefront than in the past. One could even term this the 'modernisation' of the caste system and caste psychology! But it would be quite wrong to treat this as evidence that the hold of caste has therefore increased as compared to the past. As a matter of fact that the very use of caste in the political process tends over a period to loosen caste affiliations and lessen their value since the various contending political forces all harp on the same theme and try to pull the same strings.

Still more important than all this however is the fact that the representatives of village power (representatives of the different and even conflicting components of this power) have reached the very pinnacles of the total power structure, especially in the different states, but also at the centre though to a lesser extent. The impact of this on the different political parties as also on the state and union governments has at least received some attention. What has received far less notice and been undeservedly neglected is the impact that this process has had and continues to have on the Indian village. The Indian village is no longer unaffected or indifferent to "the storm clouds in the political sky". It is part and parcel of these convulsions, increasingly acting as the subject of historical processes.

What of conflict within the village? It certainly exists. There is no truth whatsoever in the stupid idyll of village peace and rural harmony. There was nothing like this in the past and not in the present, most certainly. But what exactly is the specific configuration of the class struggle in the Indian village? The central shaping factor is still the near-monopoly ownership of the main means of production, i.e. the land. The democratic transformation of the Indian villages, without which the transition, to socialism cannot be embarked upon, cannot be accomplished without smashing this monopoly. At the same time it is not only the feudal and semi- feudal elements who are the monopolists in the Indian village. The capitalist landlords are also a part of this dreadful deadweight, despite the fact that their exploitation of the land and the labourer is of the new, capitalist type in the main. It is against this force too that the democratic revolution in the Indian countryside has to proceed and is proceeding. This means that the democratic agrarian revolution in India, one of the most important component parts of the entire national-democratic revolution yet to be accomplished, has an anti- capitalist aspect to it. This is one of the most important reasons why it is not a democratic revolution of the old type, confined to anti- feudal tasks alone and not transgressing the bourgeois framework. This is also one of the most important reasons why the Indian bourgeoisie, i.e. its non monopoly stratum, cannot be the leading force in the revolution to complete the unfinished national-democratic tasks.

This means further that in the village the basic forces of the democratic revolution will be the non-capitalist toiling peasant, i.e. the agricultural labourer, the poor peasant and the middle peasant. Unless therefore the political weight, initiative, energy, action and organisation of these forces are enormously increased, there is no hope of accomplishing the democratic revolution. And it is these forces too that have to unite and go forward to socialism. Thus the mobilisation of these basic forces of the 'democratic agrarian revolution in India is at the same time the mobilisation of those forces in the rural areas who will push our country on to socialism.

But there can be no skipping of stages. The mobilisation of these forces is not for an all-out onslaught on all the capitalist elements in the countryside nor for the abolition of all capitalist agrarian production relations. The mobilisation is for the implementation of a democratic

programme, for the completion of the democratic revolution. Further the basic forces of the revolution are not the totality of the forces which can be united with or neutralised for the ending of all forms of landlordism. The rich peasant, that other representative of capitalism in the Indian countryside, that representative also of the other way of capitalist .development in the countryside, is a potential ally of the basic force$_s$ of the revolution. And this stratum constitutes a formidable and extremely widespread force. Moreover, because of the very character of the present stage of the Indian revolution, its influence is not restricted to itself. It has very considerable influence on the middle peasant, still more extensive in size though not in power, who desires the end of landlord monopoly of the land precisely in order to jump up the social ladder and become a rich peasant. It is true that the middle peasant is in favour of ending one form of private property and the most powerful form at that. But at the same time it cannot be forgotten that he is in favour of such abolition precisely in order to consolidate and develop the petty form of property.

It may of course be asked, as to how one can regard the rich peasant as a potential ally, as also one of the participatory forces in the present Indian democratic revolution? The objective basis is provided by the two ways of capitalist development and the consequent differing attitudes to the problem of production as the engine for profit and the consequent approaches to the expansion of the market. Further the rich peasant emerged, essentially from the diminution of the scope of the feudal mode of production and the power of the landlords. Even 'transformed' landlords, though having greater links with the rich peasants, exercise power in the village in a manner which aspires to be monopolistic and exclusive. Nor is this a matter of political power alone but of access to credit, to benefits from expenditure by the state, to control of the market. The rich peasant, though to a considerably lesser extent than the other cultivating peasants, also suffers from the extra- economic coercion of the landlords, manifested in the latter's continuing control of the main means of production and important factors of production. The rich peasant has a share in this control since as a stratum it too is a participant in the state-power of contemporary India but it is a share which has constantly to be struggled for. With the edge of the democratic revolution being directed against the landlords, the objective contradiction between them and the rich peasant can become the subjective force of the latter's neutralisation or even coming over to the front of the democratic revolution.

The important possibility and conclusion emerges that as the basic forces of the agrarian democratic revolution are mobilised and pursue a policy of discrimination, of uniting all who can be united with, and as these forces sweep forward in struggle of increasing scope and tempo, they will not encounter an evermore monolithic ruling bloc, but on the contrary they will be able to bring about splits in this bloc. While the advance of the forces of the Indian revolution will, as Marx taught long ago, organise the forces of Indian counterrevolution, this advance will also win for it new allies or at least reduce the social base and alliance of its target.

As we shall see this formulation applies not only to the perspective of the agrarian democratic revolution but also to that of the Indian national-democratic revolution as a whole.

A word has to be said here about the perspective of the non-capitalist path of development for Indian agriculture. An amount of misunderstanding has been created around this term. It is quite clear that the mere breakup of the landlords' monopoly of the ownership of land and the mere distribution of land to the tiller does not signify that a non- capitalist transformation of Indian agriculture has taken place or commenced. As we know, and as Lenin stressed repeatedly, all such a step does is to clear the way for the most rapid possible development of the capitalist relations of

production, on the basis of the clearing of the chief obstacles to the fullest development of commodity production and the acceleration of the differentiation among the petty commodity producers. At the same time it cannot bet stressed too much that without this kind of radical democratic structural change there can be no question of even starting on the non- capitalist path. This is the sine qua non of the non- capitalist path. Further it is quite obvious that the democratic agrarian revolution is not and will not be a thing-in-itself. It will be a component, and a most important component at that, of the national-democratic revolution as a whole. And this is a democratic revolution of a new type, taking place in an epoch when the world socialist system is increasingly determining the main trends of world social development, where the leadership of the revolution will be in the hands of all consistently anti-imperialist, anti- feudal and democratic elements.

Therefore the distribution of land to the tiller and the development of petty commodity production need not and will not lead on to the full scale and rapid growth of capitalist relations of production. It will be led on the basis of intense struggle and fresh differentiation in the direction of the development of cooperative forms of distribution, marketing and production (in different forms again and at different levels). It will be led also in the direction of the restriction of the unbridled growth of capitalism by not only the struggle of the agricultural labourers and poor peasants but also the credit, pricing and supply of inputs policy of the state. At the same time the rich peasant will benefit not only from the removal of the incubus of landlordism, the growth of the market and removal of monopoly domination of the credit institutions as well as the commodity exchange system. He will benefit also from the general emancipation of the productive forces of society.

The policy of struggle against and unity with the rich peasant is precisely the struggle between and unity of the elements of the future socialist transformation of India and the elements of the 'revolutionary way' of capitalist development at this particular historical conjuncture of the national-democratic stage of the Indian revolution. And the non- capitalist path of development in the Indian context is precisely the path of such unity and struggle not only in the rural areas hut taking the entire ensemble of the production relations in our country.

Going on from the survey of the perspectives of the Indian revolution in the countryside, we would like to touch upon some other crucial aspects of the problem.

One of the most important of these aspects is the uneven development, economically, politically and socially, of the different areas and regions of the country. Indian developments of the past cannot be understood if we do not constantly keep in mind the continental scale of our country. Nor is this a matter of mere spatial dimensions. It is a specific and most significant peculiarity of Indian development that this uneven development is also manifested in the uneven development of the different nationalities that inhabit and make up the entity, the evolving entity, which is our country. Moreover the uneven development of the different nationalities of India has led to conflict between different nationalities due to this very difference in the level of development. It has also led to a drive on the part of the different nationalities to attain equality, to achieve expression of their identity and even to outstrip other nationalities. At the same time all these developments of the nationalities in our country do not encounter the oppression of a particular 'ruling' or 'dominant' nationality. The competition is by and large a competition of equals despite the unevenness of development. Moreover the formation of nationalities has not been completed though the Indian Union has already come into being, not only as a juridical entity but as part and parcel of the spiritual makeup and consciousness of all Indians, no matter the nationality to which they may belong. It is a particular moment of equilibrium in the development both of the various Indian nationalities as well as of the larger entity of the Indian Union. Both are evolving at the same time but

with uneven tempos, creating highly complex problems for those who are working for the advance of the Indian revolution. An interesting feature of this incomplete nationality formation is the struggle of different regions within a nationality as well as the tragedy of the division of some developed nationalities at the time of the transfer of power. If we take a long view of the mainstream of Indian history, there is no doubt that many of the areas which form the sovereign state of Pakistan are a part of this mainstream. We are not for a moment questioning; the validity and reality of the-existence of Pakistan. It is as valid and real as that of the Indian Union itself. What we are pointing to is the complicated nature of historical development in our country and the tragedy of partition which is the result of this complexity and which has added to it as well.

Yet another element of complexity is the level of development of the vast Hindi-knowing region and the state of its cohesion —will it develop in the direction of a single Hindi nationality or will several nationalities emerge? In a different way and on quite a different level, we have the problem of the tribal areas which are in ferment as never before. What is the likely perspective of their development? Would they get integrated into the nationalities in their proximity or emerge as nationalities in their own right? Or would it be a mixture of both? It is rather hazardous to attempt even a general answer, but then not all hazardous tasks are to be avoided.

The likely line of development is the ever-more integrated emergence of India as a distinct entity, on the basis of evermore integrated nationalities whose number is likely to increase. The development of the different nationalities of our country will coincide with and give full body to the development of India itself, mutually conditioning and reinforcing each other. And this development will proceed, we must remember, in the context of the national-democratic revolution, through which the transition to socialism will be made. There is thus likely to be a closer connection between the two phases of very specific development of the Indian nationalities—the two phases about which Lenin wrote in his celebrated controversy with Rosa Luxemburg and later Bukharin. And because of this closer interconnection the unity of the working people of the various nationalities will be easier to accomplish.

At the same time, because of the objective existence and a certain dovetailing of these two phases, the task of building the unity of the toiling people will encounter objective obstacles and call for greater skill and tact and flexibility. Nevertheless the most likely (and the most favourable from the angle of the interests of the toiling people) result of all these developments will be the self- determination of the Indian nationalities within the framework of the Indian Union. Secession is not likely to be the form self- determination and is certainly not the form which would most suit the interests of the toilers of India.

Another significant aspect is the nature of the power system in India which is of the greatest consequence for the perspective of the Indian revolution. It is an undoubted fact that the main form of power, whether it be armed power or political decision-making or the levers of the economy, is concentrated at the centre. Neither the unevenness of development taking the country as a whole nor the emergence of the powerful state leaders can obviate this fact. It is this central citadel of power that the forces of the Indian revolution will have to storm. It is this central citadel of power, developments in which exert powerful influence on the developments in the different units of the Indian Union. Overlooking this fact and stressing only the uneven nature of the Indian economic and political developments, stressing only the dispersal of the elements of power can lead to (and has led to) dangerous adventurist actions which can and have led to serious setbacks for the Indian revolutionary forces.

At the same time only seeing the concentration of power at the centre and completely belittling the power residing in the different states, going so far as to call them glorified municipalities, would not be a mistake in analysis only but also lead to misdirecting the course of the Indian revolution. Power is both concentrated and dispersed in India. In terms of the constitution, as well as in terms of reality, the centre can simply override the states—but only with the concurrence of the majority of the states and on the basis of a certain measure of consensus. Again, both in terms of the constitution as well as in terms of reality, the states can bend the centre to their will—but only on the basis of a consensus achieved among a number of states or in the context of a divided centre. To put it somewhat melodramatically, there is for example such a thing as the Congress high command and at the same time there are such things as Congress state bosses (the same is true of many other parties as have an all-India character). There is both a dispersal and interdependence of state-power in India, both a concentration of power at the centre and considerable residual and constitutive power in the states. If the main levers of power are at the centre, considerable footholds of power are to be found in the states.

Further just as the composition of the dispersed units of power is very far from homogeneous—it is no accident that the character of the ministries in the different states varies so much- so is the nature of the central power not homogeneous. The nature of the heterogeneity in both cases is the result of specific balance and moving equilibrium of class forces. It is of course true that the Indian capitalist class as a whole is in power and the Indian state is an executive committee of this class. But this also is not homogeneous. It has a monopoly as well as a non monopoly stratum. It has urban as well as rural components, which have not solidified into one mass. Its divisions also run along the lines of the emergence of the various nationalities. In different areas, according to the level of capitalist development as well as the type of capitalist development, it has links with the landlord class but in widely varying degree. The influence of the monopolists also varies from state to state. As a result of this heterogeneity the development of the revolutionary movement, its victories in one or more states, its running state governments combined with the continued development of sweeping mass movements and struggle (including different kinds of all-India actions) can lead to polarisation within the class as well as within the state-power of this class.

And here we come to another extremely important point concerning the nature of Indian state-power *vis-a-vis* national-democratic revolution. There need be no doubt that the national-democratic revolution will have to smash the present capitalist state and establish a new, revolutionary national-democratic state. The smashing of the old state has of course to be understood in the sense in which Lenin put it in his *State and Revolution* and *Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power?* The smashing is of the coercive apparatus, of the bureaucratic administration and of the entire hierarchical structure. It does not refer to the elements of accounting and management of the national economy which has to be taken over by the new class or classes which have taken power. What exactly is to be put in place of the old, smashed state-power, i.e. form of the new state-power, cannot be laid down in advance in any detail. Only general guidelines can be provided, for it is the masses in revolutionary action who often enough create and set up their own, new organs of state-power- as happened in the case of the Soviets in the 1905 and October 1917 revolutions. These fundamental regularities of revolution will undoubtedly be found in operation as the Indian masses surge forward to complete the second stage of the Indian revolution.

There is however likely to be a new feature, a novel element. This is the fact that the non monopoly stratum of the Indian bourgeoisie is part of the present ruling class, part of the present Indian state.

But this stratum of the Indian capitalist class is also a component of the national-democratic forces and front which seeks to overthrow the present state-power and replace it by the national-democratic state. This is an unprecedented situation. In the people's democratic revolutions of China and Eastern Europe it is true that a section of the bourgeoisie did form a part of the people's democratic front and of the people's democratic dictatorship. But, at least in the case of China, it is quite explicitly stated that this section of the bourgeoisie never held state-power, was not a part of that ruling class which was removed from power by the victorious people's democratic-revolution. Thus, though the class composition of the Indian national-democratic front and of the people's democratic front in China and Eastern Europe is the same, this vital difference will be of great importance for the specific dialectics of the Indian revolution, for the specific manner in which the old state-power is smashed and replaced by a new one.

It is in the context of the particular combination of centralised, as well as dispersed, elements of state-power, of the objective possibility of the split in the ruling class, that one has to attempt to map out the general contours of the strategy of the Indian revolution, not in the sense of the general disposition of the class forces but in the sense of the likely line of attack of these forces.

The likely perspective is the establishment of focuses of power in the states coinciding with the polarisation of the ruling class at the centre, together with the rising tempo of mass revolutionary movements and struggles, leading on to the establishment of the national-democratic front at both governmental and nongovernmental levels and the establishment of a national-democratic state.

It is here that one has to emphasise the importance of all the three elements of the line of attack of the national-democratic forces. The action of the masses (the forms of which we shall discuss a little later) is of course of supreme importance, Unless the masses—the workers, the peasants and the urban middle strata—are able to intervene on the issues of national importance and are in a state of constant mobilisation so as to be able to intervene on the issue of power itself, there is no hope for the advance of the national-democratic revolution, let alone its successful finale.

The second element is that as a result of the advance of the mass movements and struggles and as a result of the skilful and appropriate utilisation of the system of parliamentary democracy, the left and democratic parties and forces including the Congress can form governments in different states. These governments are not the same as municipal corporations. Nor is their only aim the providing of relief to the people, though this is of undoubted importance. Nor is it their only aim to 'agitate the masses', to so function that the masses 'shed their illusions' about the possibility of any significant advance through the utilisation of the parliamentary democratic system and to be in a constant state of confrontation with the central authority. This does not mean that in the states where such left and democratic forces and parties have formed the government there is to be no mass agitation and struggle conducted by the parties that are in the government. This has to be done and without doing this there can be no question of further advance of the national-democratic forces in these states. The problem of combining parliamentary and extra- parliamentary forms of action still remains, though it is shifted on to a new level. Not only for their own partial demands, not only in order to rebuff the machinations of the reactionary forces (including those in the administration), not only in order to combat the instability or sectarianism of different components of the united front governments, must the masses be kept in a state of constant preparedness and on the move. It is of even greater necessity that the masses be mobilised and brought into action for the implementation of the policies and decisions of these governments. Further it is essential to openly tell the masses in these states regarding the limitations not only of the power of state

governments but also of the entire framework within which they have to function. It is essential to tell the masses openly that the establishment of such left and democratic state governments is only a partial victory and that the struggle for power lies ahead. It is essential to tell the masses openly that these state governments can in no way substitute for their struggles and movements geared to the strategic aim of winning state-power throughout the country. There is also no doubt that the state governments will on many occasions have to come into conflict with the centre. The whole point is to conflict with the centre on issues that can mobilise not only broadest sections of the democratic forces in the state but throughout the-country.

These necessary activities of the state governments will however not exhaust their role. Nor are these the main activities and functions of these governments. The *raison d'etre* of such governments is to bring about the maximum possible changes in the structure of the economy, state and society. It is precisely the extent to which these state governments proceed in this direction that they will be able to mobilise the masses, raise the level of their consciousness, act as a model and an inspiration for the masses in other states, begin to challenge the centre 'On broad national-democratic issues and help in the process of bringing about a polarisation in the ruling class as well as raising the tempo and widening the scope of the national-democratic mobilisation. These state governments need to attempt to unite their efforts, consult with one another and function effectively in such central organs as the national development council, etc. The democratisation of agrarian relations, of the police, of the administration and of social life in general combined with the greatest possible development of the productive forces of the state will enable these governments to play their due role in the national-democratic revolutionary process.

The importance of the third element should not be underestimated either, i.e. the possibility of the polarisation and split in the ruling class. It should be remembered that there is no question here of any kind of 'conspiracy' to divide the Congress, nor is it a matter of getting involved in the factional struggles of the ruling party. The polarisation visualised is based on objective, material factors and developments. It is on the basis of this objective reality that the basic forces of the national-democratic revolution have to intervene. Naturally the effectiveness of this intervention will depend on the strength and organisation of the basic forces of the national-democratic revolution. At the same time it has to be remembered that this strength is also built up on the basis of correct policies and tactics, in the shaping of which an important part is played precisely by the anticipation and utilisation of the polarisation in the ruling class. The polarisation will be more speedily become a reality if the basic forces of the national-democratic revolution are able to unite, project an alternative programme, evolve concrete alternative policies to those being pursued by the ruling class and launch an offensive against the right-reactionary forces so strongly entrenched in the state, the- government and the ruling party.

The developments in the country since 1969 onwards have demonstrated that it is the right-reactionary forces in the ruling Congress party which pursued the strategy of either capturing the party or splitting it. This strategy cam$_e$ against the background of the rising revolt of the increasingly radicalised masses against the capitalist path of development. It came against the background of the all round crisis of this path of development. It came against the background of the steady and qualitative deepening of the general crisis of the entire world capitalist system. It came against the background of the tremendous advance of the world socialist system, especially its vanguard force—the Soviet Union. It came, finally, against the background of the growth of the forces

fighting for an orientation directed against imperialism and for social progress in the third world as a whole.

It was a combination of what can be termed the permanently operating factors in the Indian situation that played a crucial role in bringing about the particular pattern of polarisation at the centre i.e. the centrists and leftists in the ruling party proving capable of defeating the conspiracy of a powerful section of the right in their own party supported by their brethren outside. It is not the left inside or outside the ruling party which sought to split or capture the ruling party. It was the right which made such an attempt, though unsuccessfully. But this attempt was not a mere subjective wish of some scheming leaders. It was the result of the working of certain objective forces, though the actual turnout of events certainly had a large element of the subjective.

There needs to be some brief discussion finally on two other broad themes of the perspectives of the Indian revolution. One is the possible form of the Indian revolution and the other is the question of the leadership of this revolution.

AS to the form of the Indian revolution an initial misunderstanding has to be put out of the way. It is certainly not the view of Marx, Engels, Lenin or even Mao that the only possible form of the revolution in any country and at any time has to be that of one or another form of insurrection and armed civil war. Force indeed is the midwife of every old society pregnant with a new one. But the midwife 'force' does not need always to take the shape of the barrel of a gun! Revolution—yes! Insurrection and armed civil war—not always yes! This point has been urged at some length in the earlier chapters.

What needs to be made clear at the outset however is that the possibility of a peaceful transition in India (and it is a possibility and not inevitability) is not to be confused either with the reformist idea that piecemeal changes and piecemeal advances on their own way will obviate the need for a revolutionary leap or with the revisionist concept that the ballot box will be the main arena of the national-democratic revolutionary struggle. Peaceful transition is a form of *revolution* and places the main stress on extra- parliamentary mass movements and struggles, on the building of powerful mass organisations and on the need for a revolutionary vanguard, well equipped with the weapon of Marxism-Leninism and wise enough to know how to deal with unexpected twists and turns in the situation. It is also to be borne in mind that peaceful transition in India at any rate is not likely to be free of armed clashes. It is, finally, to be borne in mind that the non- peaceful path of the revolution is an equal possibility in India. While working for the peaceful path one has always to be ready for the other alternative.

It is also essential to bear in mind that the prospect of peaceful" development of the Indian revolution in the main depends not only on the fact that the balance of forces on a world scale in the new epoch makes the export of counterrevolution more difficult than it was in the case of the Soviet and Chinese revolutions. This of course is of the very greatest importance. Nor does this prospect depend only on the existence of the parliamentary 'democratic form of the dictatorship of the capitalist class. Of course this is of crucial significance. More important however and of decisive significance is the nature of the system of power discussed above, i.e. the possibility of the establishment of footholds of power by the national-democratic forces even before the storming of the central citadel of power and the possibility of a split *in* the ruling class, therefore, in the central state-power and the creation of a broad national-democratic front.

Two more points about the possibility of peaceful transition as the form of the Indian revolution. First, in a country where the possibility of peaceful transition exists, failure to attempt to utilise

this possibility inevitably results in severe setbacks for the revolutionary forces. The experience of other countries apart, we have our own experience in 1948-50 and the naxalite actions. The possibility of peaceful transition is an objective reality and to ignore it is therefore to go against objective reality and end up in the bog of subjectivism. Not to see in time that this possibility is only one of two equal possibilities leads to subjectivism and equal disaster. Second, the utilisation of the possibility of peaceful transition involves, as we have mentioned, the development of sweeping mass struggles and actions, the building of powerful mass organisations and the coming into being of a revolutionary vanguard party. It is precisely this process that, given a vigilant leadership, will ensure the success of an armed revolution should this become inevitable. And the need to exercise vigilance about the reactionaries forcing an armed civil war cannot be overemphasised; civil war is an equal possibility in India.

Now for the final theme of our present discussion, i.e. the leadership of the national-democratic revolution in India. There has been far too much misunderstanding of this problem. The desirability of the leadership of the national-democratic revolution by the working class is not the point at issue as far as the adherents of the Marxist-Leninist theory are concerned. All of them desire that the hegemony of the nation be won by the working class. It is also not in dispute that the national-democratic or rather people's democratic revolutions that are led by the working class solve more profoundly the social problems of the masses, facilitating a swifter transition to socialism. It is, finally, not in dispute that the task of completing the national-democratic revolution cannot be accomplished under the leadership of the non monopoly stratum of the bourgeoisie, because of the dual nature of that class, its proneness to compromise and inherent characteristic to vacillate especially when the mass revolutionary movement sweeps forward at an accelerated tempo. Indeed the national-democratic revolution cannot be completed without ending the hegemony of the capitalist class over the masses of India.

The point to consider is whether in the new epoch, in the concrete conditions of India today, working class leadership is indispensable for the victorious conclusion of the national-democratic revolution. The point to consider is whether in these conditions the pattern of the people's democratic revolution in China and in Eastern Europe will be repeated in our country.

In India since independence there has been a fairly considerable growth of the non monopoly stratum of the bourgeoisie in the industrial sphere as well as of the rich peasantry in the rural areas. And the representatives of these two components of the Indian capitalist class have a share in state-power as well as considerable mass following. In other words, these two components of the Indian capitalist class have fairly powerful economic position as well as considerable political influence. They cannot be compared at all to the national bourgeoisie in China or the collaborationist bourgeoisie in Eastern Europe during the foreign fascist occupation. These were far too weak politically and economically to present any kind of challenge to the working class for **the** leadership of the people's democratic front or the antifascist front. And precisely because of their weakness they were also in no position to attempt to challenge the imperialists or the fascists and to come into open conflict with them on the basis of the organisation of mass struggle and pressure. This section of the bourgeoisie in China or Eastern Europe did have its objective contradiction and conflict with imperialism, feudalism and fascism. But it did not play any oppositional role *vis-a-vis* these forces till on the very eve of, or even after, the victory of the people's democratic revolution. This is in sharp contrast to the position, policies and history of the non monopoly stratum of the Indian bourgeoisie. Leaving aside the role played by its representatives in the freedom struggle, since independence they have occupied an important place in state-power. Compromise with imperialism, feudalism and monopoly capital and the pursuit of building an independent capitalist India by

placing the main burden of development on the toiling people have gone hand-in-hand with advance in the direction of building an independent economic base, development of the public sector, developing extensive relations with the socialist camp, curbing of feudalism and restriction of the monopolists. In other words, its dual role has continued after independence.

The crisis of the capitalist path of development, the general crisis of the entire post- independence structures burst with the recession of 1965-66 to 1967-68 and the general election of 1967. It is characteristic that with the rising tempo of the mass movement and the victories of the democratic forces, as well as the increasing attempts of the neocolonialists, Indian monopolists, landlords and reactionaries to take over the exclusive leadership and control the Indian state, the representatives of the non monopoly bourgeoisie have started upon a new course. While the right-centre coalition was disrupted (though not finally broken) and though the centre-left coalition did not yet come into being (though partial and small beginnings are already in existence), there is no doubt that the centre, which is the political representative par excellence of the national non-monopoly stratum of the bourgeoisie, struck back at the rightist offensive, checked the drift to the right and moved partially to the left.

This resulted in the split in the ruling party, though this split does not represent the completion of the polarisation process. While the overwhelming majority of those who grouped around the Syndicate were rightists and while all the left in the Congress stayed with the ruling Congress, the latter was dominated by the centre and the right-reactionaries were also present in key positions. Only the further advance of the left and democratic forces can push the polarisation process further. Nevertheless it would have been the height of political folly not to recognise that a turning point had been reached in the political development of post- independence India, that the confrontation between the forces of national-democracy and those of neocolonialism and right-reaction was moving towards a climax and that brilliant prospects were opening out for the unity and swift growth of all the national-democratic forces. Any sectarianism at this stage, any insistence that only when the hegemony of the working class (i.e. the leadership of the communists) is accepted can the united front be built would have been extreme political shortsightedness and betray the very cause of establishing proletarian hegemony. Unfortunately not all the forces of left, not all sections of the communist movement, were free of this deep-rooted sectarian disease.

The process just described went on at an accelerated pace, despite the attempt that was made in 1972 to once again bring about a reconciliation on the basis of a combination of concessions by the centre to the right and the attempt to compel the latter to accept the leadership of the former. All that this attempt accomplished was the halting of the process of radicalisation that had begun so well with the nationalisation of the 14 major scheduled banks in 1969 and to the re- activisation of the right at a higher level and in a more dangerous form. *J* The massive electoral victories of 1971 and 1972 did not bring the expected stability despite the olive branch preferred to the right. Internal reaction and the neocolonialists obviously could not reconcile themselves to accepting the leadership and domination of the centre. This was all the more so because it was a centre which was increasingly adopting firmer anti-imperialist positions and moving to consistently and qualitatively strengthen friendship and alliance with the Soviet Union. In other words, it was a centre that, according to the neocolonialists and internal reaction, was moving to the wrong side of the dividing line in the central contradiction of our epoch, i.e. the contradiction between imperialism and the world socialist system.

This found striking expression in the events centred around the national-liberation struggle of Bangladesh. There can be no doubt that India played a glorious role in relation to this struggle. There

can equally be no doubt that India could never have played such a role if the rightist challenge had not been rebuffed in 1969-71 i_n which not only the left represented by the CPI but the patriotic and progressive forces headed by prime minister Indira Gandhi and the CPI had not done what they did in 1969-71. Right-reaction would have been installed in power and such a government would certainly not have come forward to aid the national-liberation struggle of Bangladesh.

At the same time, as has been repeatedly and generously acknowledged by Indira Gandhi and other leaders of the ruling party, India could play the glorious role that it did because of the Indo-Soviet treaty that was signed on 9 August 1971. This was no mere formality. It represented not merely the qualitative raising of Indo-Soviet friendship. It was the coming together of the most powerful and vanguard state of the world socialist community and the most advanced and populous country of the national-liberation zone at the level of alliance. It was these two forces together that came to the help of the liberation struggle of Bangladesh.

It was only to be expected that the neocolonialists and internal reaction would launch a counterattack. Their counterattack was considerably facilitated by the fact that the failure to implement the mandate of the elections of 1971 and 1972 gave rise to mounting mass discontent particularly because of stagnation in production and a big spurt of prices by as much as 20 per cent and above in a single year.

The first counterattack was the agitation launched in the last quarter of 1972 for the breakup of Andhra Pradesh. Seemingly confined to one state it was actually an attempt to begin the process of the fragmentation and dismemberment of our country. It is no accident that in addition to landlord-support in Andhra Pradesh all-India reaction rallied in its favour. The Jana Sangh, for example, coming out with a plan for some fifty or more states. Neocolonialist forces had already threatened that a hundred Bangladeshes would be created in India.

The struggle went on for many months leading to the suspension of the Andhra Pradesh legislative assembly in which the Congress enjoyed an overwhelming majority. For some time the administration was virtually paralysed. It stands to the credit of the working class, rural poor and their vanguard the CPI, that they stood firm and valiantly fought back the separatist offensive. Many Congress leaders and congressmen also rallied and eventually the prime minister advanced a formula on the basis of which the unity of the state was preserved. Without the firm, principled and independent stand of the CPI and the toiling people it could rally, the separatists would clearly have swept ahead. But without the prime minister—who was made the target of the most vulgar and vicious attack—and the Congress party also eventually coming out against separatism this particular rightist attack could not have been defeated.

Following the successful pulling down of the Gujarat assembly as a result of the somewhat mixed and complex ‘navanirman’ agitation and the failure to secure a legislative majority through the elections in Uttar Pradesh and Orissa, the neocolonialists and internal reaction launched upon their biggest bid for power under the leadership of Jayaprakash Narayan and his slogan of 'total revolution' in the early part of 1973.

While the scale of operations was countrywide, the chief arena of battle was Bihar. A tremendous offensive was let loose with the express intention of creating anarchy and chaos, pulling down the Bihar assembly and then going on to do the same with the Lok Sabha. The big business press and its patrons, the landlords and the CIA masterminds, did all in their power to intimidate, browbeat *and* terrorise, utilising the discontent of the masses, particularly the students and other sections of the intermediate strata.

Once again the brunt of the attack was first borne by the working class, rural poor and their vanguard, the CPI. These forces not only resisted valiantly but went on the counter-offensive on a mass scale. For quite some months they fought virtually alone, aided of course by the fact that the state power at the centre and in Bihar was not in the hands of the right, though in many places it was sympathetically neutral to their opponents, to say the least. But after a lapse of time the Congress also moved in to mobilise the masses on an extensive scale against the JP movement. The prime minister boldly *and* forthrightly opposed this crusade. And this attack too was beaten back by the third quarter of 1974.

As we shall see later the offensive was again resumed in the middle of 1975. The point, however, that one wants to make at this stage is that the centre's attempts to woo the right, placate it and thus subdue it do not succeed. The genuine left forces not only have to take the initiative in the battle against the right but do so with a unity-oriented approach to the centre. For without centre-left unity the right cannot be defeated. And also because without such defeat the shift to the left cannot be secured.

It is not only the non- monopoly national bourgeoisie's particular **physiognomy** and position that needs to be analysed concretely when we are discussing the problem of the likely leadership of the national-democratic front and national-democratic revolution in India. One has to discuss also the question of the intermediate classes and strata, i.e. those social sections which stand between the national non monopoly bourgeoisie and the urban and rural proletariat. It was a seriou$_s$ mistake of the communist movement in India that the relative independent role and activity of these social sections were underestimated.

It is now quite clear that what is somewhat loosely termed the petty-bourgeois or peasant-revolutionary democrats do play an extremely important role in many newly-liberated states. In many of these states, because of the decisive influence of the world socialist system, these revolutionary-democrats play the leading role in placing their states on the non- capitalist path and giving its basic direction a socialist orientation. Of course there is conflict and contradiction in progress along this path as also the possibility of regression. In India, with the far more developed capitalist relations of production and consequently with a far more developed (economically as well as politically) capitalist class and working class, it is not at all likely that the representatives of the petty bourgeoisie and the peasantry will be able to play exactly the same role. It does not at all seem likely that they will be able to play the exclusive leading role. At the same time it would be wrong to draw the conclusion, that they will not play any relative independent role. Inability on their part in the specific situation of India to play the sole leading role should not be equated with inability to play relative independent role.

What was the trend of left, militant nationalism has not disappeared with the advent of freedom, it has transformed itself and at a qualitatively higher level is present in the Congress as well as in some of the traditional noncommunist left parties.

They are an important element in India's political life with great political influence and a wide mass base. Of course they are an important component of the national-democratic revolutionary forces and without their participation there would be no question of building the national-democratic front. It is however out of the question that they would accept the leadership of the working class, i.e. of its vanguard party, the Communist Party, at this stage of their level of consciousness and the level of the working class movement itself. To insist upon this would be both unrealistic and sectarian.

The perspective of the development of these representatives of petty-bourgeois and peasant democracy is in the direction of their increasing attraction towards scientific socialism and the positions of the working class. One has the precedent of the leaders in many African, Asian and Latin-American countries. However this transformation is neither going to be smooth nor swift in India. Indeed it has not been so elsewhere either. United work and patient, tactful ideological struggle will be essential if this process is to be helped forward. Sectarianism is singularly out of place. But so is lack of attention to appropriate criticism and failure to stress the independent role of the working class and its party.

It needs to be emphasised at the end, however, that while eschewing all sectarianism on the question of the leadership of the national-democratic front, while adhering to the concept of the collective leadership of this front, that without the working class, the rural proletariat and the toiling peasantry vastly increasing its political weight in the life of the nation, there is absolutely no chance of building the national- democratic front. It is the representatives, of the working class, the rural proletariat and the toiling peasantry who have to take the initiative and play a pioneering role in building this front. Without the working class playing an independent and pioneering, vanguard role the petty-bourgeois mass might well fragment and swamp the revolution or even become the victims of counterrevolutionary ideology and politics. This requires tremendous work but offers most inspiring prospects for any genuine Indian revolutionary.

The working class, the rural proletariat and toiling peasants have of course to be organised to wage a defensive battle to ensure that the capitalist class is not able to place all the burdens of development upon their shoulders. They have to be organised (o struggle for a decent standard of life, for a more human condition. But this is only the start of work. The forces have to come on to the stage of history as subjects and not as objects of the historical process. They have to come forward not only as the disinherited but as the inheritors of all that humanity has produced and all that lies ahead of it now not only on earth but in the universe. They have to come forward as the vanguard of all the healthy forces of India. They have to produce, and in a very vital sense, be produced by, their own vanguard political organisation. And this is a realistic prospect. The working class and to a lesser extent the rural proletariat have changed quite considerably in the past two decades. Not only have their numbers swelled but their character has changed. They are better educated, more linked to modern methods of production and more aware of what should be their position. Fatalism, ignorance and the enforcement of stupidity are encountering ever fiercer resistance. Yet a very great deal remains to be done. Exhilarating work lies ahead for those who have a penchant for enlightenment and who feel the injustice rampant in India on their own skins.

The Indian revolution today emerges on the basis of and is meant to secure the resolution of the dual development that has taken place in the economy and society of post- independence India. This dual development has had its impact on the outlook of the Indian working man and the preworker, i.e. the student. Radicalism and revivalism coexist and compete and the unity of opposites this psychology represents has to be quickly resolved if the entire future of India is not to be split asunder.

In this process of India's revolutionary development a significant role would be played by the new intelligentsia and by the feedstock of that intelligentsia, the student community. Considering that still about three-fifths of Indians continue to be illiterate neither the number of students nor of those who eventually are employed as some kind of mental labour is very large. But in absolute terms they are to be counted in millions and this figure represents quite a substantial increase since independence. Even more important than these quantitative statistics is the change in the composition of this

intelligentsia and its psychological-ideological makeup. No doubt the proportion of 'humanities' students is very considerable as is those who can be called one or another kind of 'clerk'. But, firstly, among the 'humanities' students the percentage of those who are first generation students coming from lower social strata of the town$_s$ and villages is probably now more than those who came from the traditionally educated families. Then, again, the prestige of the 'humanities' has gone down in favour, of medicine, engineering and commerce. This is not to say that there has been a sudden increase in careerist outlook among the students. It is absolute nonsense not to realise that for almost everybody who goes to college learning is for earning, as they say. But the kind of earning that is more paying and prestigious and also possible is what is important in this context. Finally, a much larger proportion of the intelligentsia is now 'industrialised'. This does not only apply to those who are directly absorbed into industry as highly-skilled workers, engineers, supervisors, scientific workers or managers but also the vast number of other employees whose occupation, work conditions and the rest bring them quite close to that of the industrial worker.

Apart from this, there are now quite a number of scientists and technologists and various types of professionals who do extremely skilled, important and strategic work. These are sometimes referred to derisively as the 'new brahmins'. There is of course a certain arrogance and aloofness about some of them. But there can be no doubt that the majority are not only patriotic and anti-imperialist bull in some, not always flattering, ways not very different from the general run of what is loosely called the middle class or, more accurately, the intermediate strata. Their importance is far greater than their numbers. But what is much more significant is that they are to be counted as among the allies of the working class and the working people in the revolution that is taking shape in our country. The trouble is that so little is really being done to approach them or even know them.

When one is discussing the question of the intelligentsia one inevitably has to say something about the Gramscian 'traditional' and 'organic' categorisation of this stratum. The categorisation is of course relevant, but perhaps not quite as new as some would like to think. It is really as old as the Marx-Engels thesis about the division of mental and manual labour and the point in the *Communist Manifesto* about the possibility of a section of those of the ruling class coming over to the revolution at a certain critical point of the revolutionary process. It is also to be noted that in his *What Is To Be Done?* Lenin has some wonderfully perceptive comments to make about how scientific socialist consciousness emerges and is brought to the working class. His post-revolutionary writings on the role of the intelligentsia after the revolution has come to stay are also very important.

As a matter of fact, one is of the view that 'organic' intelligentsia does not really scientifically describe those of the working class who become as educated and as proficient in mental work as the intelligentsia. If they continue as workers or act as the ideological-political representatives of the workers, then they continue to belong to that class. And those belonged to the intelligentsia and who go over to the working class also become the representatives of that class quite as much as those who were born in it. Here it is a matter of class-consciousness and affiliation which are objective realities even though not material products.

What is important is the reminder from Gramsci that the intelligentsia as such has its limitations even though a left trend can be developed therein. And that to educate and enlighten the working class itself is among the most indispensable, inspiring and challenging of tasks facing the revolutionaries, particularly those of contemporary India.

A great test for the understanding of the revolutionary process in our country came with the acceleration in the tempo of counterrevolutionary activity in June 1975. A life-*and*-death situation came into existence following the Allahabad high court judgement declaring the election of Indira Gandhi as void. Immediately with revived hopes the JP-led crusade came directly to the nation's capital. With a new stridency the call was renewed for the resignation of the prime minister. This time the police and the armed forces were not just told not to obey 'immoral orders'. Now they were told that if they obeyed orders they would be punished. Elaborate plans were made at all kinds of private and semiprivate conclaves to create situation of total breakdown of the administration in the capital along with scarcely veiled threats against the life of the prime minister. It was a significant fact that following the judgement of supreme court judge Krishna Iyer which on any account was more favourable to the prime minister than the Allahabad high court verdict, all the big business papers without exception asked, or rather demanded, that Indira Gandhi should step 'down from prime ministership.

Clearly, neocolonialism and internal reaction were moving towards the coup de grace. The CPI and other left and revolutionary forces faced a new and critical challenge not least to their capacity for creative grasp of the specifics of the Indian revolutionary process.

There could be no doubt about two basic features of the situation. One, that the forces of neocolonialism and worst internal reaction were trying their utmost to dislodge prime minister Indira Gandhi from power and to take total state-power into their own hands. Second, that prime minister Indira Gandhi's government represented the class interests of the bourgeoisie of India and the dominant section pursued a dual policy of struggle as well as compromise with the imperialists, landlords and monopolists and which often took up anti- working class and anti-working people policies and measures. In any event, its basic policy was not one of building socialism or national-democracy but independent capitalism.

In such a situation should the CPI remain neutral? Or should it independently strive to overthrow the Indira Gandhi government, maybe in alliance with some other left parties, but taking advantage of the chaos and anarchy being created by the forces of neocolonialism and worst internal reaction? Or should it even join the latter on the ground that the ruling bourgeoisie was always more dangerous and more the enemy of the working class than the bourgeoisie in opposition? The CPI wisely and courageously rejected all these alternatives. It based itself on a firm Marxist-Leninist analysis of the contending forces. It came to the correct conclusion that it was precisely in the class interests of the working class and favourable to the cause of advancing the national-democratic revolutionary process in our country that the counterrevolutionary attempt to dislodge the Indira Gandhi government should be defeated. It was well aware of the class character of that government. But it was as well aware of the class character of neocolonialism and the worst forces of internal reaction. While towards the former a policy of unity as well as struggle had to be pursued, towards the latter there could only be the approach of uncompromising battle to the finish. It was a life-and-death question for the working class and other revolutionary, patriotic and progressive forces in our country. *If* the neocolonialists and worst forces of internal reaction triumphed it would not only be the Indira Gandhi government that would be pulled down. It would represent a decisive to crippling defeat for the CPI, for the working class and all other revolutionary, progressive and patriotic forces.

Such has been the experience of the triumph of fascism whether in Europe in the 1920s and 1930s, or Indonesia in 1965 or Chile in 1973. Learning from this experience and basing itself on the generalisation of this experience in the historic antifascist united front line worked out at the 1935 seventh congress of the Communist International, the CPI decided to do all in its power to defeat

the forces of counterrevolution and to build the broadest possible unity of all those forces threatened by and opposed to fascist counterrevolution.

The CPI was also firmly of the view that the defeat of counterrevolution need not and could not lead merely to the preservation of the status quo. The defeat of counterrevolution was indispensable for the advance of the revolutionary process. But more than that the struggle for the defeat of counterrevolution was simultaneously the struggle for the extension and intensification of the revolutionary process. This was so for the following reasons.

First, the struggle against counterrevolution required the unification of all patriotic, progressive and left forces and would help to facilitate the achievement of this unification.

Second, the logic of the struggle against counterrevolution was its growing over into the battle for social transformation which would curb and weaken the socioeconomic base of neocolonialism and the worst forces of internal reaction.

Third, the battle against counterrevolution would provide opportunity for the consistently revolutionary forces to display their mettle, come forward as unifiers, as initiators and develop their capacity for hegemony.

At the same time, the CPI was well aware that all this would not be an automatic process. Because of the class character of the different forces that would inevitably make up the front of battle against counterrevolution, it was[1] well aware that within this front there would be struggle and that the building of this front would be a difficult and zigzag process. All the more would this be the case in India given the present balance of forces between the non- monopoly bourgeoisie, the petty-bourgeoisie, peasantry and working class.

While cognisant of the 'difficulties, the CPI was optimistic about the outcome. There were two basic scientific grounds lor this optimism.

First, the battle in India was not an isolated event. It was an integral part of the international struggle against imperialism, for peace, freedom, democracy and social progress. It was taking place in an epoch whose chief characteristic was the transition on a world scale from capitalism to socialism. It was taking place, moreover, at a time when the world balance of forces had altered qualitatively in favour of the anti-imperialist and progressive forces. This was a time when the world socialist community of which the Soviet Union is the vanguard and most powerful force and the other world anti-imperialist forces have become the decisive force shaping world social development. No doubt the maoist betrayal did 'do tremendous damage but it could not negate nor reverse this process. Should the maoist betrayal get reversed in China then of course this process would receive a new impulse.

The world situation is also characterised by the fact that the 'drawing together of the socialist community, above all the Soviet Union, and the other anti-imperialist forces (including newly-independent states such as ours) is proceeding with great momentum, despite setbacks here and there. The Indo-Soviet treaty of 1971, the Brezhnev visit of 1973 and Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's visit to the Soviet Union in 1976 are milestones of our two countries coming closer and closer. The relations between our two countries are no longer based only on the principles of peaceful coexistence. They are more and more taking on the features of an alliance based on an ever-greater unity of objectives and views on international issues and ever-closer economic connections, including production cooperation. Nor is this confined to the Soviet Union. Our country has relations of the same quality with other friendly socialist states. This exercises a significant and beneficial influence not only on developments on a world scale but also internally

in the countries concerned. This should not be taken as an example of Soviet 'interference' in the internal affairs of our country or any other. As a matter of fact the impact of this influence is great precisely because there is no interference or any attempt at it. The influence is on entirely different grounds.

To use the words of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi the Soviet Union is a true friend because it helps India to be itself! And during her recent visit to Moscow she used the words that she hoped India and the Soviet Union would continue to march together and in step with history. In other words, the influence exists because patriotism exists and this patriotism gets more vigorous expression as an anti-imperialism that inevitably orients towards an alliance with the forces of socialism on a world scale. This does not mean that the patriotic forces would immediately or automatically adopt the same approach to the CPI or other radical forces internally. But certainly the scope for joint action and dialogue is widened and hence also for mutual understanding and appreciation and eventually unity.

It has to be emphasised that this is not confined to Indo-Soviet relations, though these are undoubtedly the most significant and crucial. It is no accident that it is in this period too that our country's relations and friendship with, e.g., Cuba and Vietnam have also strengthened. Indeed this is the case with all anti-imperialist radical states and forces.

Second, the CPI's optimism is based on a scientific assessment of the character and logic of the contradictions of contemporary Indian society. AS has been discussed in the earlier pages India's transition to socialism is mediated through the broad class alliance of a national-democratic revolution. The contradiction of the non monopoly bourgeoisie with imperialism, landlordism and the Indian monopolists is an objective reality. All the attempts at compromise and unification cannot wipe out this contradiction.

Linked up with this is the equally ineradicable objective reality that the path of independent capitalist development on which the non monopoly bourgeoisie has placed the country cannot solve the problems of national regeneration and development and gets caught up in it$_s$ own inherent *and* inextricable crisis. This is the case not only in the economic sphere but politically as well. A veritable national revolt opens up against the capitalist path of development and the non monopoly bourgeoisie is not only compelled to try to adapt to the compulsions of the situation but the objective basis is built up for its dislodgement in positions of hegemony and exclusive rule.

Other forces of the national-democratic revolutionary process—the working class, working peasantry and agricultural labourers and toiling sections of the intermediate strata—who are opposed to the capitalist path of development are objectively impelled forward to take their due plac$_e$ in this process. Once again it has to be emphasised that the objective basis only gives the revolutionary forces a historical change. Their advance and victory is not predetermined in any mechanistic sense. History's making depends on their wisdom and their knowledge in the bringing into being of which the vanguard party plays an indispensable role. And the realisation of the historical chance thrown up by the movement of objective reality come$_s$ through revolutionary struggle or revolutionising practice.

It was this comprehensive understanding that guided the CPI in the turbulent days of the offensive of counterrevolution from 1973 to 1976. It was this understanding that led it to support the declaration of the national emergency on 26 June 1975 and the subsequent 20-point programme announced by the prime minister.

There could be no doubt that the declaration of the emergency did contain dangers and possible negative consequences for the working class and other democratic forces, even of quite a serious nature. The CPI pointed this out from the start, particularly in relation to possible bureaucratic excesses. At the same time the CPI was firmly of the view that without the declaration of emergency catastrophe could not have been averted. Without the declaration of the emergency the counterrevolutionary bid for power on the part of the neocolonialists and the worst forces of internal reaction would have succeeded. India's freedom, democracy and unity would have been dealt a mortal blow. The CPI therefore supported this bold preemptive blow by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

It is significant that the Soviet Union, friendly socialist states including Vietnam and Cuba, progressive anti-imperialist states of the third world also supported the declaration of the emergency. The USA and other imperialist power$_s$ bitterly opposed it and cried hoarse about the demise of Indian democracy. Indeed it could be said that support and opposition to the declaration of emergency in India ran along the lines of anti-imperialism and pro- imperialism. It was a commentary on the tragic shortsightedness of the CPM *and* some other left parties and forces that they found themselves in the company of the pro- imperialists both at home and abroad.

The CPI, while supporting the emergency, made a clear-cut class characterisation of it. It stated that the emergency was the use of the capitalist state-power against the most reactionary, anti-Soviet and anticommunist sections of the vested interests. Thus it was not as if the CPI was of the view that the emergency was the use of the state-power by the working class or by revolutionary-democrats. While it Was no doubt a blow by the state against the most rabid enemies of the working class and other democratic forces in our country, it could not ho forgotten for a moment that this state had a very definite class character—it was and remains a capitalist state. This naturally gave its own character, limitations and dangers to the emergency.

Nevertheless it has to be emphasised that the neocolonialist, fascist and right-reactionary takeover of the country could not have been prevented without the declaration of the emergency $_{tl}$ At that moment of time in the third week of June 1975 it Would have been impossible to have achieved this by swift mass mobilisation. That would have taken much more time and there was at that moment no time left—the sands had virtually run out.

At the same time it has to be emphasised that neither the emergency nor the announcement of the 20-point programme have ensured the rout or the elimination of the neocolonialist and right-reactionary menace to our nation, its democracy and the revolutionary process. This menace has been given 'a sharp blow and, thwarted for the time being. The forces behind it are bound to try to stage a comeback, not necessarily in the same form and manner. It is only to be expected that they would seek to use all the avenues which the inherent limitations of the emergency leave open for them. And they would be able to do so all the more because their socioeconomic base remains largely undamaged, their influence in the state and bureaucratic apparatus as well as in the ruling party. Even more important is the fact that the unity, mobilisation and striking power of the patriotic, progressive and left forces still leave a tremendous lot to be desired. The unity of the Congress, the CPI and other patriotic and progressive parties and forces has yet to achieve that degree of cohesion and that level which would make it an invincible defender of the freedom, democracy and social progress of our country.

The immediate outcome and perspective of the Indian revolutionary process is still in the balance. It is on the anvil of struggle—a struggle in which none of us are spectators but participants and partisans. But it is a struggle requiring not only courage and militancy on the part of all revolutionaries but also tact, capacity to win over others and a scientific vision. And it is a struggle which the revolutionaries of our country can engage in with fully justified historical optimism.